

THE DEFECTION OF THE COUNTER CULTURE:
A PAPER IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Graduate School
The University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Virginia Mary Steib

August 1970

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Abstract

The thesis was a study in the Sociology of Literature. The purpose was twofold. The explicit purpose was to illustrate the works of fiction being read by the counter culture (an anti-establishment group of white, usually under-thirty college students, of the hippie or yippie variety) as reflecting and reinforcing their values, attitudes and ethos. It was maintained that the literary themes of disaffiliation, refusal, absurdity, existential choice, social involvement, mysticism, myth, sensuous life styles and the saintliness of insanity, meshed together, mirrored and formed the weltanschauung of the counter culture. The implicit purpose was to place these values into a conflict situation depicting the counter culture as a reaction against the cerebral life style of the societal mainstream.

Theoretically, the thesis was structured according to three basic assumptions of the Sociology of Literature. The first two assumptions, reflection and social control, refer to the fact that literature reflects and likewise reinforces the predominant societal norms and values. Their application was restricted in the present study, however, by the utilization of the third assumption, the notion of selectivity which limits the concept of reflection and social control to just one social group, in our case the counter culture.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | <u>Page Number</u> |
|--|--------------------|
| INTRODUCTION. | 1 - 4 |
| CHAPTER ONE | 5 - 22 |
| A Review of the Material on the Sociology of Literature | |
| CHAPTER TWO | 23 - 39 |
| The Counter Culture: Its Values and Norms | |
| CHAPTER THREE | 40 - 57 |
| Joseph Heller and the Youthful Disaffiliates | |
| CHAPTER FOUR. | 58 - 75 |
| Hermann Hesse, J.R.R. Tolkien and America's Disenchanted Young | |
| CONCLUSION. | 76 - 78 |
| FOOTNOTES | 79 - 88 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY. | 89 - 94 |

INTRODUCTION

"'Would you state your name?' asked defense attorney Leonard Weinglass. 'My name is Abbie.' said Hoffman. 'I am an orphan of America.'

'Where do you reside?' asked Weinglass. 'Woodstock Nation,' Abbie replied.

'What state is that in?' inquired Judge Hoffman, an accomplished though frequently unwitting straight man. 'The state of mind,' quipped Abbie. 'It's a nation of alienated young people which we carry around in our minds just as the Sioux Indians carried around the Sioux nation in their minds.'"¹

Other witnesses in this "mockery of justice" included Phil Ochs who delivered protest-song lyrics to the jury and "bearded poet-guru" Allen Ginsberg who offered some "Buddhist chanting (Om-Om)." "Timothy Leary, the high priest of psychedelia turned up in buckskin and shoulder length hair to testify to the devotion of defendants Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, 31, to the 'politics of love.' Later, four-letter words filled the air as avante-garde theater director Jacques Levy ('Oh Calcutta' 'America Hurrah') denied U. S. Attorney Thomas Foran's charge that Levy had proposed a program to f---- the system and f---- the draft."²

So went the recent trial of the Chicago seven. Although this circus scene might appear senseless and perhaps infuriating to some, the defense considered it an absolutely necessary "part of the defendants' attempts to explain their life style to the jury."³ According to chief defense counsel William Kunstler, "This is a political trial where their identities and values are on trial, and not the criminal acts they may have committed."⁴

It is exactly this life style of the youthful counter culture involving norms and values diametrically opposed to those of the mainstream of society with which this paper is concerned. For, the explicit purpose of the paper shall be to illustrate the reinforcement and reflection of the values, attitudes and ethos of the present day American youth cult by the works of fiction currently popular with the under thirty crowd. It will be maintained that the literary themes of disaffiliation, refusal, absurdity, existential choice, social involvement, mysticism, myth, sensuous life styles and the saintliness of insanity mesh together, mirror and form the weltanschauung of the counter culture. Dependent upon the central purpose shall be the implicit theme portraying the youthful values reflected by the above literary themes as representing the life forces of emotion, passion, etc. struggling against the cerebral forces of death which are embedded within the sterile life style of our technocratic society. Thus, in keeping with the times and with the very nature of the "children's crusade" the values of the youthful "disestablishmentarians" will be presented in terms of conflict.

The paper shall be divided into four separate chapters. The first chapter, a review of the existing material on the sociology of literature, will be limited to those articles which either directly or indirectly emphasize the importance and significance of the concepts of reflection and social control. Quite simply, these notions refer to the fact that literature functions as a means of reflection and social control of cultural norms and values. Regardless of the unpretentious nature of these concepts, they are, in fact, the underlying assumptions of almost any research pertaining to the sociology of literature. Likewise, they serve as the backbone to the variety of complex versions of reflection theory. The

diverse adaptations of reflection shall, of course, be discussed in the following review of the literature.

In regard to this paper, however, reflection will be restricted to the initial task of solely illustrating the reinforcement and reflection of values and norms. Even though the integrative tradition of reflection will be implied by the reference to the "fundamental reality principle" of the counter culture, the more complex aspect of integration will not be developed due to time limitation. Therefore, the technique of selectivity which applies the notions of reflection and social control to just one social group or sub culture (in our case, the counter culture) shall be utilized enabling a viable though less extensive and more qualified adaptation of reflection.

The second chapter shall develop the implicit theme of the paper thereby establishing the values of the counter culture and placing them into the conflict situation of "hip" life forces pitted against the elements of death characterized by the mentality and life style of the societal mainstream. Chapters three and four will turn to the literary works patronized by the young. Here the paper's explicit purpose shall be carried out in a discussion of the actual reflection and, thus, reinforcement of youthful values by the literature which the young read. It will be shown how these works of fiction reflect "hip" values, blend them together and create a literary mirror of the spirit of the counter culture. The picture will be one of a small but significant group revolting against the mood of the larger society from which it springs.

The research method employed by the present study shall rely upon library research in the fields of sociology and literature. The authors which I have chosen to speak for the young are the modern experimental

writers, primarily the black humorist Joseph Heller in his novel Catch-22. Also in vogue with the disenchanted young are the romantic writings of German author, Hermann Hesse and the mythical fantasies of England's J.R.R. Tolkien. These men were not chosen at random by this writer but rather were suggested by the numerous articles on youthful reading habits written by prominent literary critics. If interested, the reader may refer to the bibliography at the end of the paper. It might be well to insert here that for the purpose of this study new leftists and hippie types alike will be included within the ranks of the counter culture, for as Arthur Mendel pointed out, "Both the radical and the hipster are either actively or passively involved in the great refusal."⁵ Additional requirements to membership in the counter culture are that one be white, middle class and preferably a college student under thirty. Young blacks were purposely eliminated since the writer sees them as a separate subject.

The paper is undoubtedly subjective, relying upon the intuitive insights of literature rather than the statistical information of science. This approach was deliberate, for the writer maintains that there are areas of sociological inquiry, not only unsuited to, but distorted by the scientific objectivism so popular in current social science circles. Obviously, it is believed that the present study exemplifies an instance where the above observation applies.

CHAPTER ONE

A REVIEW OF THE MATERIAL ON THE SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE

"Anna Sergeyevna was silent for a while. 'And so you haven't the least artistic feelings?' she observed, putting her elbow on the table and by that very action bringing her face nearer to Bazarov. 'How can you get on without it?' 'Why, what should I need it for, may I ask?' 'Well, at least to enable you to study and understand men.' "

Turgenev, Fathers and Sons

The stereotype of the sociologist is usually rather cruelly depicted as being a sad, drab little man who obtusely misses out on everything of importance while systematically trying to place the essence of the human experience in a tube so that it can be tested back home at the lab. Of course since this stereotype has not been scientifically verified one way or the other, it is impossible to draw objective or reliable conclusions as to the exact nature of a typical sociologist. But any graduate student in the field can testify to the fact that the sociologists have not as yet succeeded in completely cutting themselves off from that stuff of which people are made. Upon close surveillance of even the most eminent and distinguished social science circles, it becomes apparent that there still remains the nitty gritty of just plain folks involved in the subjective process of human interaction. For instance, adrenal flows, name calling begins and variables, dependent or independent, are forgotten with barely a whisper about the rather esoteric but supposedly central issue as to what does or does not constitute the valid areas of sociological inquiry.

The sociology of literature is an excellent example of an area where most of the energy expended has been on the unobjective polemics mentioned above. Perhaps these ingroup skirmishes partly explain the

reason for Leo Lowenthal's complaint, "that there is still no complete and up-to-date bibliography relating to sociology of literature and art in the United States."¹ The degree of disorganization is further illustrated by Hugh Duncan's remark that, "our greatest present need is some kind of organization of the whole field of the sociology of literature."² In any case, there exists ample disagreement regarding the analysis of literature to keep the sociologists performing like people for quite sometime. However, this disagreement and disorganization does add to the difficulty of trying to conduct a study having to do with the sociology of literature.

The writer, however, did begin with the good fortune of running across the informative article by Ian Watt. Here the initial question concerning literature and society suggested by Madame de Stael in 1810 is straightforwardly addressed and answered in a rather condensed and simplified manner. To Madame de Stael's question, "What are the relationships of literature and society," Watt answers that, "although much has been written about the relations between literature and society, the main categories of inquiry have remained fairly constant."³ He says that they may be reduced to three. First, there is the concern with the "social position of the writer and the nature of his relation to his public."⁴ The second category has to do with literature as a reflection of the society from which it springs. "Finally and most generally there are the ultimate problems of the social functions of literature and of how far literary values correspond to social."⁵

The concern of this paper is with the notion of reflection, Watt's second area of inquiry. Although Watt did not elaborate any further in this regard, Milton C. Albrecht in an article entitled, "The Relationship of Literature and Society," presented an extensive investigation of the concept of reflection. The first part of this chapter, therefore, shall

offer a summation of Albrecht's paper. First, he gave a history of the various traditions in literary analysis that use reflection as their primary assumption. Next, he established the direct relationship between the social control and reflective functions of literature. He then discussed the technique of selectivity. And finally he offered his opinions on influence theory.⁶ Even though influence theory does not pertain to this study, it shall be commented on since the writer has some definite value judgments in this direction.

Initially it was pointed out by Albrecht that the commonest conception in the sociology of literature has been that, "literature reflects predominantly the significant values and norms of a culture."⁷ As stated in the introduction, the present study shall restrict itself to this basic assumption. No attempt will be made to extend the hypothesis of reflection into any of the more complex theories to be talked about in the following discussion. However, insofar as these numerous interpretations of reflection were a vital part of this paper's research, the writer feels that they should be given brief review.

Albrecht begins his history of the theories springing from the concept of reflection by suggesting that perhaps the integrative version has been the most productive. Studies conducted in this manner submit literature and other arts as a reflection of the "fundamental reality of a culture, variously called 'culture mentality,' 'weltanschauung,' 'spiritual principle,' or 'soul,' and of the different stages in the development of a culture."⁸ The best known contemporary representatives of this tradition are Spengler, Sorokin, and Toynbee. Basically, it is maintained by the above trio that the essential cultural outlook revealed by reflection is integrative in nature for it is the organizing element around which the beliefs and activities of a society are built.⁹

This version of reflection does, of course, overlap the fundamental idea that reflection represents the primary norms and values of a culture which shall be used by this study. What's more, allusions will be made to the integrative tradition through the references to the "spirit" of the counter culture. However, as mentioned earlier, the application of the notion of selectivity shall delimit the development of integrative theory. This approach is essential, since the entire theories of social unity and change resulting from an indepth investigation of the "fundamental reality of a culture" extend far beyond the range of this paper.

In addition to the integrative theory of reflection Albrecht stresses the importance of the theory which comes from the dialectical materialism of Marx and his followers, "who select the economic system rather than ethos or soul as the independent variable."¹⁰ Albrecht explains that this version sees, "literature and art, along with other 'ideologies,' as being determined by the 'mode of production in material life,'¹¹ and by the ideas of the ruling class, which are in every epoch the ruling ideas."¹² He goes on to point out, "but in the dialectical process, manifested in the class struggle, 'art expresses the tendencies of the rising and, therefore, revolutionary class.'"¹³ Veblen, Caudwell, Fox, Calverton, Parrington, and Hicks are some of the followers who have used these ideas. Although a few of these men are strict Marxists, the majority of them simply adapt and select some of Marx's concepts. According to Albrecht, the most fruitful application of Marxist thought in the sociology of literature pertains to notion of class influence on literature. For instance, Parrington did a comprehensive study showing how the class and economic position of various writers influenced their economic, religious, and political theories as well as the character and style of their literary works.¹⁴

Parrington's study is suggestive of another approach to the sociology of literature based upon the notion of reflection which is not mentioned by Albrecht. It is probably apparent that the approach referred to is the sociology of knowledge. In an article, entitled, "The Sociology of Knowledge in the Study of Literature," Alexander Kern outlines a procedure subdivided into various steps to be followed in the application of this technique.¹⁵ Although the guide offered by Kern does appear workable, it is indicative of an extremely lengthy investigation.

The final adaptation of reflection theory mentioned by Albrecht rests upon the assumption that, "literature, mainly fiction and biography in popular forms, reflects social facts: vocational and divorce trends, population composition and distribution."¹⁶ Although this approach is mechanistic and doesn't seem particularly promising, Albrecht maintains that the results of the studies conducted in this manner indicate the, "direction of the distortion of statistical facts."¹⁷

After reviewing reflection theories of integration, dialectical materialism and statistical distortion, Albrecht then discussed another aspect of research pertaining to the concept of reflection. His comments were directed to the present lack of awareness concerning the close relationship between the reflective and the social control functions of literature. These remarks have a direct bearing upon this study since it agrees with Albrecht that if literature reflects values, it likewise serves as a method of reinforcement or social control of values. However, this opinion is in the minority. Generally it is believed that the concept of social control is merely an extension of influence theory which emphasizes literature as "shaping" society.¹⁸

Albrecht contested this established belief. He said that the important correlation lies, instead, between the reflective and social

control function of literature resulting in the reinforcement of values. He then submitted the formal proposition that, "if literature reflects, then it also confirms, and strengthens cultural norms, attitudes and beliefs."¹⁹ To substantiate this position he quotes Mukerjee as saying that, "Art is at once a social product and an established means of social control."²⁰ Of more authoritative consequence, are the studies by Inglis²¹ which find no evidence that popular literature "shapes" society but instead that it effects a degree of social control by supporting the status quo of American attitudes and beliefs. Additional works by Warner and Henry²³ and Berelson and Salter²⁴ generally confirm the findings of Inglis.

Next, Albrecht's analysis of the concept of reflection turned to the notion of selectivity. This idea is, as has been repeatedly mentioned, central to the present study. Albrecht's remarks were, therefore, most helpful. In brief, selectivity refers to the following idea. The literature which reflects and in turn reinforces group values, thus effecting a method of social control is limited to that literature which confirms the perspective of a given group. As Albrecht says, "In short, different social classes or groups in our society may select and emphasize distinct social and aesthetic values, ranging from comic books to stories in the New Yorker, or from popular fiction to classical art."²⁵

It might be mentioned that Albrecht is not the only sociologist who stresses the importance of selectivity. Ian Watt²⁶ and Levin Schuckling²⁷ also point out the need to realize the degrees of selectivity and likewise indirectness with which literature reflects and reinforces societal norms. A lack of awareness of this notion obviously leads to distortive generalizations. Regardless of Leo Lowenthal's belief that, "The most telling truths about society and the individual are contained in a literature not read by the broadest strata,"²⁸ selectivity remains the wisest approach

for a novice in research. For, it is indeed a risky business to try to deduce exactly what are those "telling truths" of which Lowenthal speaks. Failure in this attempt is not only irrelevant but untrue. Another reason, then, for this paper's use of selectivity might be called academic safety or perhaps, cowardice.

Albrecht concludes his paper by making his ideas known about influence theory. He feels that actually influence theory itself is essentially based upon nothing but value judgements. The theory merely revolves around opinions as to whether or not literature, art or films are desirable or undesirable for maintaining a working balance within the social order.²⁹ He states that not enough substantial data has been accumulated to allow for viable conclusions to be made about the effect of art upon social behavior one way or the other. To the common belief that literature plays an important role in shaping lofty ideals he offers Eastman's conjecture that the men of letters have a personal stake in perpetuating the "myth" of the elevated part affected by literature in molding the nature of human and societal behavior.³⁰

Although the notion of the influence of literature upon society is theoretically separate from the concepts of social control and reflection to be used by this paper, the writer does have some definite value judgments about literary influence. Thus, it is best that these personal values be openly stated lest they be allowed to go the way of all value judgments and insidiously infiltrate the "objectivity" of the paper. The direction of these pre-conceived notions can be found in a statement made by Max Weber. He writes, "Art has become a cosmos of independent values which are in dynamic tension with religion and which take over the function of a this worldly salvation, especially from the increasing pressures of theoretical and practical rationalism."³¹

The writer does not feel it necessary to defend the position taken by Weber since influence theory has nothing to do with this study. Nor will the paper concern itself with investigating the validity of Albrecht's contention that there is as yet no scientific evidence to support the view that literature or art helps to shape society. However, the writer does feel ambiguous about Albrecht's conclusion in this regard and should like to suggest that they themselves might lead to an interesting and informative study.

"The Relationship of Literature and Society" by Albrecht was unique because it was the only article that this writer ran across which dealt directly with reflection and social control as established, recognized theories around which to organize sociological research. More commonly these concepts are merely indirectly and silently assumed. Albrecht's investigation, therefore, offered the significant contribution of organizing information about concepts which, could be argued, are at the very core of research in the field of the sociology of literature. More specifically, he provided the writer with the bulk of sociological theory to be used in the present study of literature and society.

J. H. Mueller in an article, "Is Art the Product of Its Age?" presented a criticism of reflection theory. Essentially he feels that it, "is too all-embracing to be useful."³² Although I do not agree with him, I do understand his point. The very nature of the relationship between literature and society itself is conducive to grand theory far too sweeping to be useful. On the other hand, the unrestricted application of reflection could easily be over emphasized and propert to tie up the essence of an age in one full swoop. However, it is believed that the exercise of common sense plus the notion of selectivity assist in curbing the human tendency to theorize until everything is bundled together in a neat, orderly, and

and consistent theory which explains away the confusion and chaos so menacing to the human psyche.

For the sake of illustration, let us consider for a moment what could happen in a discussion of a society's spirit, soul or whatever, not limited by the notion of selectivity. Incidentally, in academic circles these notions are referred to as "weltanschauung." Although the word appears a bit forbidding once it is translated as "view of the universe," we immediately realize, of course, that everyone has one. It is not as apparent, however, that they vary according to which nation, period, religion, class or group a person happens to embrace. Here then is the problem. There is a very strong tendency to become obsessed with one's own personal weltanschauung and think that, indeed, it is the spirit of the times.

This unfortunate generalization leads to erroneous thinking for sure. Consider for example the current scene in America. In the year 1970 the United States can not be, all at once, taken over by effete snobs for peace, capitalistic pigs, niggers, racist skin heads, communist radicals, and dirty hippies. Or how can the mood of the nation be, all at once, law and order, love and peace, revolution now, Vietnamization and escalation, profit and gain, black power and the freedom to go to the school of your choice. On the other hand, if we were as a people, all at once, alienated, violent, sexually repressed, self conscious, apathic, cut-off, lonesome, and powerless, how could we even function? Yet, the cosmic absurdity is that yes, every one of these things is happening in the same country at the same time. And yes, we are as a people alienated, violent, sexually repressed, self-conscious, apathic, cut-off, lonesome and powerless. The only logical conclusion would then be the depiction of our society's Weltanschauung in just one word --- schizophrenic.

Whether or not this dramatic generalization is, indeed, correct

remains irrelevant. Instead, the point of consequence is that the conclusion was drawn without realizing the saving selectivity of the various moods and psychic states. It should never be forgotten, therefore, that according to Schuckling there is no such thing as a spirit of the times but instead a series of said spirits.³³ Of course, the works of Sorokin, Spengler, and Toynbee are evidence to the fact that a fundamental reality principle can be deduced from the "series of spirits" of a particular culture at a particular point in time. It is believed, however, that an undertaking of this magnitude and depth should be reserved for men like Sorokin, Spengler and Toynbee. The writer, therefore, shall insist once again that the present application of reflection and social control be selective. Thus the topic of conversation shall be limited to only one of the intangible spirits floating about---the spirit of the counter culture. Even though references will be made to the overall national character and cultural mentality, it should be remembered that these references are seen from the perspective of the counter culture and that they are not advanced as documented evidence on the predominant Weltanschauung of the era.

Philip Gleason's article, "Our New Age of Romanticism" typifies the regrettable consequence of the unselective application of reflection. Gleason got caught up in the spirit of things and hypothesized that we are living in a new age of romanticism because the kids are reading Tolkien and Hesse.³⁴ Actually I am very sympathetic with his position because I am inclined towards making the same type of generalization. Nevertheless, it is still an overstatement for it places too much importance upon the small group of romantic rebels and forgets about the very unromantic characteristics of the bulk of our population. What happens in an article like Gleason's is that the values, norms and personality patterns of one group end up being passed off as representing the mentality of the total

population. Nothing is gained except another distorted picture of social reality, already sufficiently unclear.

On the other hand, when properly utilized, the concept of reflection results in sophisticated and enlightened articles such as the one written by Isadore Traschen entitled, "The Form of the Literature of Crisis." His paper was developed around the central thesis which maintained, "that if the archetype of death and rebirth is the form underlying the evolution of a crisis, then it would logically give shape to the literature of a period."³⁵ Furthermore, he assumes that our period is generally recognized as a period of crisis and thus we might expect the archetype to be a primary force in shaping modern literature. He writes, "Our crisis is signaled by that movement which called for renewal of the self. Renewal meant redemption---to be reborn, was to be saved. Reason, industrialization, science, the bourgeois ethos----these were sterilizing us; and passion, nature, art, myth--these would save us."³⁶

By drawing upon the works of the "passionate yeasayers" such as Yeats, Gide, Mann, Joyce, Lawrence, Miller, Camus, Faulkner, Hemingway, Sartre, and Grass, he substantiates the notion that salvation is the underlying force in modern literature and that the archetype of death and rebirth is therefore the underlying form. Next he points out that the oppositions noted in the works of these authors (blood to mentalism, joyousness to geometry, etc.) are ways of realizing the archetype.³⁷ He continues to explain himself by writing

"These oppositions are instances of the polarities which make up so much of modern thought: abstract-concrete; science-art and myth: objective-subjective; conscious-unconscious; rational-irrational; mean-excess; reason-passion; thought-feeling; mind-body, etc. It is not the conflict I want to call attention to at the moment, but rather the impulse behind the conflict, nothing less than the impulse for regeneration. For if from the point of view of the modern writer, the first of these polarities account for what is sterile and dead in our culture, the second

terms hold forth the promise of rebirth. Thus, though the conflicts are different, their meanings are the same; they are simply different forms of the arch-type of death and rebirth.³⁸

Both Traschen and Gleason saw the romantic strain in contemporary literature and both extrapolated conclusions concerning the spiritual principle of the times. As I pointed out earlier, however, Gleason merely offered some vague generalities which were not sufficiently developed to be extended as comments on the entire society but instead should really only be regarded as being relevant to one particular social group. Yet, Traschen's archetype of death and rebirth signifying the modern literary impulse for regeneration was specific but still inclusive enough to suggest meaningful insights into the overall portrait of the present period.

For instance, if so inclined, one could use Traschen's thesis as a viable framework for investigating the multitude of social movements so prevalent on the modern American scene. The notion of regeneration, death and rebirth would tie in quite well with the very nature of these movements, for it could easily be argued that they too are examples of this same phenomenon. Anyone the least interested in social movements could not help but notice that the current brand of movements is indeed mutations of revitalization movements attempting to revive a dying, sick, society. Or to state their purpose less dramatically, these movements are attempts at bringing about whatever social change they deem necessary for the restoration of the health and well being of the cultural order. Ideas so organized would not necessarily be restricted by relevance to just one social group but might perhaps be expanded into depicting a contemporary theme or mood. For, within these movements is represented everyone from revolutionary blacks to white middle class housewives, all of whom are trying to regenerate themselves by revitalizing the society in which they live.

Yet more specifically and when related to some of the ideas of this paper, Traschen's conception of modern literature could be developed as a reliable reflection of the increasing impetus of the great refusal against the present overpowering technocratic society. The existential metaphysics of the literature arguing for the renewal of the instinctual, sensual and the irrational could be reasonably characterized as a reaction against, "being crystalized by scientific, or moral laws, by conventions, by organizations; against being treated and manipulated as so much dead matter."³⁹ However, this correlation is suggestive of what could be done if this paper were to be a commentary upon the relationship between the total spectrum of modern literature and the present day American society in its entirety. As I have stressed before, an undertaking of this breadth, no matter how appealing, extends far beyond the range of this paper. Thus, any references to the ideas presented in the article by Traschen are limited to the literature being read by just one group---the members of the counter culture. Still this writer feels that such references are acceptable for there is no reason why his ideas can not be scaled down to allow for the application to an area more selective than the one implied by his paper.

The next group of articles to be discussed in the review of the existing material on the sociology of literature pertaining to this particular paper has to do with the form of modern literature. These articles were most helpful in interpreting Joseph Heller's Catch-22 which typifies what some critics call the new novel or new fiction. The discussion shall be brief since the ideas found in these articles shall be included within the main body of present study.

Herbert A. Block in a paper published in the American Sociological Review entitled, "Towards the Development of a Sociology of Literary and

Art Forms" points out that the form in addition to the content of art is illustrative of the mood of the times. He then offers a classification of stylistic alternatives which result when authors lack a common social idiom as in times such as ours. He says that they may write journalistically, nostalgically, turn to the protest novel or describe the workings of inner processes rather than outward events.⁴⁰ It is the final alternative which characterizes the present form of most young, American writers.

Herbert Gamberg's paper, "The Modern Literary Ethos: A Sociological Interpretation," found in Social Forces concludes that this "inner direction" of modern writing is indicative of a personal, introspective and non social position. Next, he lapses into an elaborate explanation for this irresponsible, non-social perspective of contemporary authors.⁴¹ From the point of view of this paper, however, his expose is irrelevant and erroneous since it is defending an opinion which itself is untrue. The inner direction of the new fiction is most surely not devoid of social significance. On the contrary, it is making the most meaningful social commentary on contemporary life that can be possibly be made at this particular point in time. It is pointing out how institutionalized absurdity dominates the personal lives of men living under the reign of the present technocratic society.

Furthermore, a paper by James Roberts entitled, "The Role of Society in the Theater of the Absurd," goes on to explain that this surreal pre-occupation of modern fiction is an attempt to protest against a life which is the result of "society's destruction of individualism of communication and of being forced to conform to a world of mediocrity."⁴² Even though the form of this fiction is seen in terms of psychological surrealism, the content is essentially a new expression of social protest.

"The Social Meaning of the New Novel in France," by Stanley Gray maintains that experimentation and change in the form of the novel is essential. Unless a new, dynamic relationship is established between the writer and his audience which will more actively involve the reader, the protest novel will become meaningless. For Gray alleges that mass society has a capacity to render harmless the conventional novels of dissent.⁴³

The articles reviewed thus far have either contributed to an understanding of the general theoretical stance of the thesis or have assisted in the interpretation of specific areas of investigation to be dealt with later at various stages in the development of the following chapters. The last few articles to be mentioned have in common with those papers pertaining to theory the fact that they shall seldom be actually quoted or referred to in the main body of the paper. The writer sees them as relevant, however, because they provide a strong defense for the intuitive, subjective exercise typified by this study. They affirm the notion maintained by the writer that research in the field of the sociology of literature is not only valid but imperative, for it is suited to the accumulation of social insight often inaccessible to objective, scientific procedures hailed by some social scientists as the only viable technique open to sociological inquiry.

The defense of the sociology of literature offered by Lewis Coser was found in the introduction to a text designed to implement literary works in the pursuit of the study of societal questions. Hopefully, sociology taught through literature would bring to life a subject which is often unnecessarily dry. The idea is for the literary imagination to stimulate the sociological imagination so that students might realize that indeed there exists a real life connection between public issues and personal troubles. In any event, Coser took great pains to remind the

sociologists of the social technician mentality that the great traditions of sociology are humanistic and that an alliance between literature and sociology is definitely in keeping with this tradition. He warns the "abstract empiricists" and "the professional social pathologists" that the "sociologist who ignores literature is bound to be not merely a much impoverished man but a worse social scientist."⁴⁴ More emphatically he writes, "Sociologists who, to use Veblen's phrase, dream of a 'highly sterilized germ-proof system of knowledge, kept in a cool, dry place' ought to realize that such preoccupations, if pursued exclusively, may retard the progress of sociology as a humanistic discipline far more than they advance it."⁴⁵ As obvious as this may sound, it is indeed a minority opinion. Even more in left field is Coser's contention that, "Trained sensibilities of a novelist or a poet may provide richer social insight than, say, the impressions of untrained informants on which so much sociological research rests."⁴⁶

Richard Hoggart's article, "Literature and Society" develops the ideas proposed by Coser even further by alluding to Herbert Marcuse's argument for the double and unified vision as presented in Marcuse's One Dimensional Man. There is, of course, a strong similarity here to ideas already discussed in Isadore Traschen's paper. Hoggart maintains that there are two distinct "gateways to knowledge."⁴⁷ The second gateway of intuitive knowledge has been practically made extinct by the dominance of the scientific mentality of the present system's technical, efficiency experts. Thus, not only human life but human knowledge has been severely dehumanized by the influence of the technocracy. In fact most people don't even bother to think because they can not equal the exacting output of a computer and feel their instinctual sense for things to be sadly inferior to the autocratic considerations of the experts. Yet luckily

literature remains as a constant reminder to modern man that not everything of significance to the human experience requires a Ph.D. to understand. It should never be forgotten says Hoggart that without comprehending good literature no one can really perceive the tempo and rhythm of the times in which they live. For inherent within the very essence of literature is the key to awareness of the "submerged currents in an age's life"⁴⁸ And, it is this gateway which leads to wisdom rather than the unfulfilling, mechanical accumulation of computerized data irrelevant to solving the big questions like how shall men live in times of loneliness, dehumanization and chaos.

Having reviewed the material on the sociology of literature germane to this paper, the next step in the study shall be to establish the values of the counter culture which are supposedly reflected in the literature currently being read by the young. The process, of course, shall be primarily subjective since this paper is not an objective study relying upon hard data but instead draws support from the intuitive ideas of the writer and of scholars who have made the youth cult their main object of concern. However, it is Isadore Traschen, a man of letters, who provides the most applicable, framework in which to place the young. His arch-type characterizing the dichotomous forces of death and re-birth pertains because it will be argued that through their reading the young see themselves as representing the rejuvenating element of rebirth since they cherish the authentic values of feeling, passion and sensuous life styles appropriate to existential thought and opposed to the mechanical, cold existence of the mainstream of society ordered by the dead structure of "essential thinking."

The rhetoric used to affirm and contrast these polarized life styles shall be borrowed almost entirely from the recent book by Theodore Roszak, the Making of a Counter Culture. Roszak, however, concerns himself with predicting the possible failure or success of the Dionysian

life style adopted by certain American young. Whereas, this writer intends to make it quite clear at the onset that the purpose of this paper is descriptive rather than predictive. Happily this approach should avoid many of the empirical and theoretical problems with which Roszak became entangled.

CHAPTER TWO

THE COUNTER CULTURE; ITS VALUES AND NORMS

The Hip and The Square

1. The List

HIP

wild
romantic
instinct
negro
inductive
the relation
spontaneous
perverse
midnight
nihilistic
associative
a question
obeying the form of the curve
self
crooks
free will
Catholic
saint
Heidegger
sex
wedeln
the body
rebel
differential calculus
Schrodinger's model of the atom
Wilhelm Reich as a mind
Marx as a psychologist
Thelonious Monk
the N. Y. Herald Times
Trotsky
Dostoyevsky
Havelock Ellis
D. H. Lawrence
Nixon
Churchill

SQUARE

practical
classic
logic
white
programmatic
the name
orderly
pious
noon
authoritarian
sequential
an answer
living in the cell of the square
society
cops
determinism
Protestant
clergyman
Sartre
religion
rotation
the mind
regulator
analytic geometry
Bohr's model of the atom
Wilhelm Reich as a stylist
Marx as a sociologist
Dave Brudeck
The New York Times
Lenin
Tolstoy
Krafft-Ebing
Aldous Huxley
Dulles
Clement Attlee

The Hip and The Square

1. The List

Hip

Inches, feet, yards and miles
 Alchemists
 hipster
 call girls
 the child
 the present

 T-formation
 dialectical
 anarchists
 barbarians
 illegitimacy
 Picasso
 sex for orgasm
 a catlike walk from the hip
 sin
 physiology
 manners
 doubt
 grace
 murder
 psychopathic
 orgy
 murder or homosexuality
 marijuana
 motorcycle
 reconnaissance
 to deduce by touch
 nuance
 to listen to the sound of the
 voice and then take one's
 meaning from there

Square

the metric system
 chemist
 beatnik
 psychoanalysis
 the judge
 the past and/or the planned
 future
 single wing
 linear
 socialists
 bohemians
 abortion
 Mondrian
 sex for ego
 a bearlike walk from the shoulder
 salvation
 anatomy
 morals
 faith
 force
 suicide
 schizophrenic
 onanist
 cancer
 liquor
 scooter
 guided tour
 to seduce by reasoned argument
 fact
 to listen to the meaning of
 the word and obey no
 other meaning

Why the list?¹ Several reasons, the first being that here Norman Mailer illustrates, in sort of a slapstick fashion, the polarization of the cerebral versus the anti-cerebral. And second, this polarization presents a neatly packaged interpretation of Traschen's arch-type when applied to the present paper. Since, for our purposes the cerebral characteristics of being "square" account for what is sterile and dead in our culture and the terms attributed to "hip" indicate the coming promise of re-birth. Seen from this perspective, then, "the List" takes on a multitude of meanings. Specifically, it establishes the civil war between the "square" culture of the mainstream and the "hip" counter culture of the young as a battle of the cerebral death forces pitted against the life forces of re-birth. Theoretically, it implies an underlying metaphysical conflict since the dichotomous terms of "The List" are epistemologically opposed to one another representing two different ways of knowing---- "one existential and the other essential."²

The generation gap, therefore, is no small matter. The conflict extends beyond a difference in outward behavior into a more influential clash of inner thought processes. Although thought is conditioned by society,³ it will not, however, be the aim of this chapter to methodologically present the social and historical factors that produced the discrepancy in the mental structures of the under and over thirty groups. Rather the point to be made is the decisiveness of conceptual differentiation. It is a fact that how a person knows determines how he sees the world and in turn influences what type of individual he shall become.⁴ More specifically, the "peculiar" behavior and disaffiliation of the current generation of kids is not merely a passing phase but instead the result of a way of thinking quite foreign to the majority of the "square"

population. Theodore Roszak, an over-thirty academic spokesmen for the young, elaborates upon this difference when he writes, "It strikes me as obvious beyond dispute that the interests of today's college age and adolescent young in the psychology of alienation, oriental mysticism, psychedelic drugs and communitarian experiments comprise a cultural constellation that radically diverges from values and assumptions that have been in the mainstream of our society at least since the scientific revolution in the seventeenth century."⁵

It will be maintained by this paper, therefore, that the youthful "disestablishmentarians" constitute a new, emerging class characterized by an existential outlook which does, in fact, result in their alienation from the traditional American way of seeing things. This chapter than by contrasting the existential and essential perspectives of the "hip" and the "square" shall fullfil its aim of establishing the values, norms and ethos of the counter culture which are in direct opposition to those of the mainstream. The works of Theodore Roszak, Arthur Mendel, and sociologists J.I. Simmons shall assist in depicting the above picture of conflict.

To begin this theoretical trip into the contrasting life styles, thought processes and actions, E. Corian offers an excellent statement explaining the antithesis of spontaneous, existential thinking and the cerebral essential thought process. Corian believes

"If we know abstractly, objectively, scientifically then we know everything but we are nothing; we are merely detached observers, note-takers. If we know concretely, subjectively through feeling and through passion, through a lived life rather than an idea only, we have become something because we have risked ourselves. We have made one serious moral choice: we have chosen to become ourselves by giving ourselves. In this way we may be transformed, reborn. This, of course, guarantees nothing, to risk is to risk. Aberrations may be frequent, though we will have to ask

what an aberration really is and how undesirable it really is vis-a-vis our processed normals."⁶

The elementary but fundamental questions posed by Corian in the above statement provide an appropriate starting point for an exploration into the brave, new world of the nation's disenchanted young. So, let us consider first, what is an aberration? According to Webster an aberration is, "1) a departure from what is right, true and correct. 2) a deviation from the typical, or the normal."⁷ In light of the definition it seems advisable to backtrack even further and appraise the present, personal meanings that the terms truth, righteousness, normal and typical have for us as individuals within contemporary mass society.

Keep in mind, however, that this introspective exercise will be slanted, seen from the eyes of the counter culture. In addition, except for the indentifying characteristic of an intangible "existential state of mind," the reader should also recall that these spontaneous "hip" characters are middle class whites, usually under-thirty college students, of the hippie or yippie variety further unified by their pursuit of the same basic question, "How shall we live?"⁸ According to them, says Roszak, the answer to the relevant life issues of truth and righteous, in the minds of most citizens of the current technological age, is what the experts tell us is true and right.⁹ It is obvious that truth and righteousness are relative since they vary according to which particular experts happen to be in favor at a particular time. It is still upon them, though, the technical experts that we depend for guidance to correct and righteous living.

Thus, when we get ready to make love, we pull out the most prestigious sex manuel written by the top expert on loving making; when we start

to raise our children, we first consult the most eminent authority on child rearing; before making any moral decisions about war, equality of the races and just generally good conduct of human behavior, we must first find out what the experts say these decisions should be. We live, therefore, not by what feels good and right at the moment but by what is scientifically dictated to us by the experts to be the most logical and reasonable avenue of pursuit.

This interpretation of average American life corresponds to Rollo May's contention that the trouble with twentieth century man is his incapacity to feel.¹⁰ "It follows, the young would say, that to feel would be unscientific, it would mean defying the experts, it would mean an aberration. And who, in these times of mass men would want to commit an aberration---to be atypical, abnormal, or incorrect. So, we (the mass men, the writer included) continue to chug along as "cheerful robots" doing what those "who know better" tell us to do. And, if we are middle class, the experts tell us that the typical and normal behavior is to spend most of our youth preparing for the future. This preparation entails putting one's nose to the grind stone, forgetting all personal likes and dislikes and plunging ahead into the tedious task of accumulating the most technically competent skill capable of reaping the highest monetary rewards.

Once the preparation is over and we are tired, nearly old, yet very eager to go about the much-awaited joy of living life, we find that living life normally means functioning moderately, maturely and responsibly. To be mature, moderate and responsible is to put aside the adolescent fantasies of "unrestricted joy." It means that the teen-age preoccupation of really getting to know somebody, sharing secrets, and being blood brothers up until the bloody end is a stage of growing up that all mature,

responsible people eventually pass through with the proper dignity and grace. Instead friends become people with whom one practices the qualifying art of being a stimulating conversationalist. It means, in effect, being lonely. Yet, we are told by the experts that there is no cause for alarm since loneliness is merely an integral part of the human condition. It's normal.

In retrospect, then, it appears that we normal folks, according to liberated youth, are living under the reign of a totalitarian state ruled by technocracy. Roszak in his recent book, The Making of a Counter Culture, formally defines our present technocratic state as, "a society in which those who govern justify themselves by appeal to technical experts who in turn justify themselves by appeal to scientific forms of knowledge, and beyond the authority of science there is no appeal."¹¹ Furthermore, Roszak contends that any form of traditional protest is useless for the totalitarianism of the technocracy is "ideologically invisible" and goes "unperceived" as a political phenomena" since it is above repudiation, shielded by the exalted position of being a "grand cultural imperative."¹²

Consistent with this line of reasoning is the notion that the normal debates between conservatives and liberals alike are not really aberrations since they fail to attack the primary source of oppression---the technocracy itself.¹³ Therefore, as long as we remain within the technological framework and think according to its "essential" dictates, we shall continue to be ruled by the invisible imperative. We shall have no other choice than to think and act in terms of the "objective consciousness" of essential thinking. There are no choices because our thought process is an extension of the "conventional, scientific world view" which presently rules our lives and is incapable of invalidating its own worth.¹⁴

Only those who think existentially, who "know subjectively, through feeling and through passion," are able to make the risk of committing their own personal aberration.

In light of the above youthful world view the answer to Corian's second question, "how undesirable an aberration really is vis-a-vis our processed normals,"¹⁵ is apparent. For if the state of normality constitutes being an unfeeling, lonely, automation, it hardly seems as if an aberration could be any more undesirable than normality itself. Unfortunately, however, the "hip" perspective renders most of us categorically incapable of committing an aberration since we are wed to normality by the objective consciousness of "essential" thinking which in turn makes us what we are---normal.

On the other hand, the hip people maintain that they have broken the cycle. By choosing to take the risk of thinking and acting according to the existential dimension of the sensuous and instinctual, they can be abnormal. They have, then, by their very thought process separated themselves from the true American way. The extent of this break is impressive for Roszak writes, "Indeed, it would hardly seem an exaggeration to call what we see among the young a counter culture. Meaning a culture so radically disaffiliated from the mainstream assumptions that it scarcely lookstoo many as any culture at all but takes on the alarming appearances of a barbaric intrusion."¹⁶

To a certain extent that is exactly what it is, a barbaric intrusion of holy barbarians. We have had our complacent normality questioned by a band of mystic intruders who come not with weapons of war but with songs and icons of peace, since they see the crisis in this civilization

as one of a spiritual nature. The saying goes, about holy barbarians, that their very presence indicates, "a change felt in the rhythm of events that signals one of those cyclic turns which Robinson Jeffers has written about."¹⁷ Whether or not the modern brand of barbarians will effect such a turn, or whether this turn will eventually do an about face and go reactionary, or continue to move in the Dionysian direction of Roszak's interpretation of the counter culture, or emerge into a golden mean type of cultural order represented by Sorokin's integral cultural order, or just end up being "absorbed" by the technocracy is beyond the scope of the present paper to decide. Although, I am not concerned with prediction as is Roszak, I do agree with his interpretation presented in the preceding pages that, "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."¹⁸

J. I. Simmons in his book, It's Happening, upholds the same belief. In spite of Simmons' rhetoric being different from Roszak's, they both share the writer's view of the youth scene as an existential reaction against the cerebral. Even though Simmons' discourse revolves around a youthful rejection of the Protestant ethic as compared to Roszak's Technocracy, he too presents the current mood of the counter culture as moving toward a subjective "mystagogy" of psychic growth than an intellectual doctrine of ideological reform.

According to Simmons, the kids maintain that the divine practicality of the establishment's Protestant ethic is heretical, neurotic and dated.¹⁹ They say it's neurotic because the normal people who live by the expert's golden mean of moderation, the eleventh commandment of the Protestant ethic, are sick in the soul, being afraid of risk. This pathological fear

of risk reduces life to nothing more than a perpetual preoccupation with death, right up until the much awaited climax, death itself. Submission to the safe and scientific doctrine of personal equilibrium which maintains that it is healthier to cry a little, laugh a little, care a little, and occasionally feel a little pride, a little shame, signifies a cop-out larger than death because at least there was a choice to be made.

Next, the young evangelists preach the heresy of the "essential" ethic of Protestant moderation. They say that as a people we have made the wrong choice. We worship the wrong God. They proclaim that the courageous, human choice is, of course, their god. Loudly they exalt the mysterious wonder of the Dioynisian diety as opposed to the stifling Appollian God of ordered rationality.²⁰ Prophetically, they explain that the former demands taking a chance, an all or nothing gamble. What's more, they say the chance is worth it, for all Appollo has to offer is a life spent merely marking time. More down to earth, it is precisely this prospect of growing old in a stupor of moderate restraint that terrifies so many of the young. One young man made the candid comment, "One spent a lifetime in America hedging one's bets, keeping up one's guard and never letting anyone look too close for fear of being laughed at or looking foolish."²¹

Finally, they pronounce America's metaphysical scheme in which there are no saints and sinners but rather winners and losers as having outlived its objective, money-making purpose. The prime function of profit and gain has degenerated even further into sheer exploitation. The winners are openly rewarded for their capacity to manipulate efficiently and effectively people and things around to the advancement of their own self interests. And the losers are ostracized as tender-minded strangers who

don't fit in, who deviate from the norm, who fail to shine in the glittery world of personality packages, material success, and financial achievements because they are supposedly suffering from some inherent flaw in human nature which lessens their capacity to exploit man, nature, and society for their own benefits.

Assuredly the kids announce that "come the revolution" the prestige of these roles will be reversed and there will no longer be strangers in a strange strange land. The Protestant ethic and its corollary, moderation, will be outlawed. As for the tin gods who dictate this evil code, they'll be ridiculed, banished and immediately replaced. "Come the revolution" the new age will cherish humanism rather than materialism and experience instead of discipline.²² The self-righteous conviction that drove past generations to war, racism and self-destruction will wither away under the loving tolerance of a new breed of men, spontaneous and free. In a final roar of indignation the kids can be heard shouting

"Look at you, blowing up whole countries for the sake of some crazy ideologies that you don't live up to anyway. Look at you, mindfucking a whole generation of kids into getting a revolving charge account and buying your junk. (who's a junkie?) Look at you, needing a couple of drinks before you have the balls to talk to another human being. Look at you making it with your neighbor's wife on the sly just to try and prove that you're really alive. Look at you, hooked on your cafeteria of pills and making up dirty names for anybody who isn't in your bag and screwing up the land and the water and the air for profits and calling this nowhere scene the great society. And you're going to tell us how to live? C'mon, man you've got to be kidding?"²³

So they say. The eloquence of their proclamations depends upon how high they are. Perhaps I sound unsympathetic with the lofty ideals of the counter culture. Yet, let me warn the reader that this is deceptive. I am a square sympathizer who would be delighted if these young "dis-establishmentarians" could effect a change of the present humdrum course

of events into a romantic transcendence toward some "nameless higher reality." I have, however, some serious doubts about the chance for such a metaphysical transformation. And even though I am officially uninvolved with talking about future trends, these doubts are bound to affect the general tone of the paper.

First off, I see the possibility for the realization of such a change anytime in the near future as doubtful for it is based upon the rather shaky assumption that man's economic struggle is nearly won and the future energy can be dedicated to the development of the esthetic dimension of human existence. To me, the actualization of this utopia is questionable, now or ever. Even if the present priorities were restructured, enabling a fair distribution of wealth and power, would not the very size and complexity of modern society necessitate that man continue to concern himself with the objective matter of maintaining a machine which provides us with food, shelter and freedom from disease? Rather than decreasing, it appears that environmental problems are increasing as the size of earth's population doubles. These considerations are, of course, economic in nature and demand a type of analysis distinct from this study. Yet, they can hardly be overlooked and do unfortunately make the life of free spirits seem as far away as ever.

Second, I am a strong believer in what Herbert Marcuse calls the technocracy's "absorbent capacity; its capacity to provide satisfaction in a way which generates submission and weakens the rationality of protest."²⁴ And, I feel as does Roszak that if the counter culture is to have any lasting effect upon the over-all culture that it must, "overcome the commercializing and trivializing technique of the technocratic society."²⁵ Otherwise, it will be "absorbed" by the "technique of commercialization"

into representing nothing more than another huge advertising gimmick. It can hardly be said that there is anything rational, assertive or effective about protest which can be purchased at the nearest department store. Yet, this is, in effect, how the technocratic society absorbs dissent. Put it on the market and sell it! Thus, it becomes routinized into the course of our daily lives. We become programmed to think about protest as we think about everything else--in terms of commodities.²⁶ And, the need to participate in history-making is now satisfied by surrounding ourselves with things that the media convinces us represent change and progress. Absurd as it may sound, social movements symbolize to most Americans, not ideas, but various forms of fashion---mini dresses, maxi coats and bell bottom pants. "Want to get involved with what's really happening? Run downtown and buy yourself some motor cycle boots. Then you too can be an easy rider!"

Finally, I have my doubts about any long term effect that the youth cult might have because of the youth themselves. During any encounter with these people, I find the need to be constantly reminding myself that, as writes Roszak, "For better or for worse, most of what is presently happening that is new, provocative and engaging in politics, education, the arts and social relations (love, courtship, family and community) is the creation of youth."²⁷ Nevertheless, it is still extremely disconcerting to try and carry on a conversation when the usual response is limited to a limp, sick grin, a swish of the hair and utterances like groovy, beautiful or "they are all pigs, dirty capitalistic pigs." How discouraging to think that the humanitarian hopes for the future are pinned on these inarticulate kids who piss in people's waste baskets, parrot unoriginal rhetoric and refuse to listen to anyone who doesn't agree with them.

Yet still, even though their own personal behavior is often far from loving, they are after all, the ones who coined the slogan "Make Love, not war." And it is the impetuous youth, instead of the thoughtful aged, who write, "No new policy or new politician is going to bring an end to what we object to in this country. What we need is a new way of life, a brotherhood of men."²⁸

So, when evaluating the present state of affairs, one should remember that a good deal of criticism against youth is based upon private experience like my own which is indeed restricted to a small, inadequate sampling. I find it helpful to remind myself that these kids are often defensive and obnoxious, not simply because they are the spoiled products of affluence and indulgence but because they too, for all their gusto, are probably afraid. Many of them have discontinued education, avoided the draft, and adopted a life style which will not provide them with success as it is normally defined. For sure, they must be constantly trying, in whatever way possible, to reassure themselves that they have made the right choice. This is a heavy burden to be dumped upon young and inexperienced people. The only support they get is from their peers who are equally lacking in knowledge and experience. From everyone else, they are continually told that they are wrong. The only adult guidelines that are given to them about life is the uninspiring advice that they should cut their hair, take a bath, finish college, enroll in graduate school and pick an appropriate career.

Also it should be kept in mind that the nature of most criticism against the youthful disaffiliates is reference to individual behavior. Generally, it is completely irrelevant to their behavior as a group, or as a social movement. Undoubtedly it is youth as a group, a movement or a sociological happening that merits investigation. And, as a group, evidence confirms that they are collectively concerned with making life more human

in an age which has dehumanized the majority of the population. Their participation in the civil rights movement, the peace movement and their very disaffiliation from society reaffirms my belief that they have, to quote Roszak once again, "clearly succeeded in embodying radical disaffiliation---what Herbert Marcuse has called the "Great Refusal."²⁹

Quite seriously, it is believed by many, the writer included, that this refusal is the modern means to salvation. For unless a large segment of the population comes to an abrupt halt or, if you will, drops out and refuses to move in the direction that the present society is pushing us, we shall destroy any hopes for the actualization of truly human potentialities. It is not an exaggeration or political party line rhetoric to insist that a society which places men in slots, subordinates the worth of people to products and victimizes human beings to militarism and organization depersonalization is a society bent upon annihilating the human spirit.

Arthur Mendel in an article on the great refusal entitled, "Robots and Rebels" views (as does Roszak, Simmons and the writer) the noisy yippie and quiet hippie unified in their existential rejection of the cerebral life style of the great society. He explains that the "disaffiliation can be either active or passive,

It is active when the rebels insist upon action that has clearly human, moral or creative value; they may be activists in the more publicized civil rights movement, peace corps or community action committees or anti-war demonstrations, or in private ways in which they have chosen careers of social service or aesthetic creativity rather than those associated with traditional success or the pursuit of power. On the other hand, the great refusal is passive when the rebels just let go, step down from the treadmill of time and achievement into a timeless presence, the residence of sensual and contemplative delight. Here too there are the spectacular hippies and the more important millions who are finding the time that was supposedly never there to enjoy

the books, music, sports, arts and crafts, travel, open companionships and all the other joys that economic man could only skimpily, grudgingly and guiltily allow himself."³⁰

The fundamental issue of the counter culture is depicted once again as an inquiry into the problem of "How shall we live?" Generally, this is the pursuit of the new left and flower children drop-outs. Roszak suggests that

"We grasp the underlying unity of the counter culture, then, if we see the beat-hip bohemianism as an effort to work out the personality structure and total life style that follows 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 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."³¹

We see then that the "cultural revolution", as wrote Jack Newfield in an article, "The Literature of the Movement", is not just "economic, political, or social but a total revolt which is just as concerned with sexual repression, violence, and depersonalization as it is with the racism or the war in Vietnam." It sees rational life as we now know it as being fundamentally absurd and considers America "cold, crazy and immoral."³² It involves a way of knowing and a way of life in complete contradiction to the orderly, sterile existence perpetuated by the technocratic establishment.

Thus, in actuality it should be realized that the counter culture is "essentially an exploration in the politics of consciousness."³³ For the kids are equally concerned with the problems of both psychic and social reality. As has been presented in various ways in the preceeding

pages, their belief is that institutional reform alone can not possibly alleviate the troubles confronting modern man. What is needed is a whole new life style, new values, attitudes, and norms based upon an entirely different thought process responding to the warmth of human feeling rather than the cold intellect of practicality. Here then is the unifying element of the active and passive participants in the great refusal. And from this perspective springs their values of disaffiliation, refusal, absurdity, existential choice, social involvement, mysticism, myth, sensuous life styles and the saintliness of insanity which shall be found in the following works of literature appropriated by the young to carry forth the message of their apocalyptic cause.

In closing I offer a statement by sociologist Simmons who shares the same freedom of values as does the writer.

"The long term solution, almost all swingers agree, is to turn the world on. Their dream is to live in a world of beautiful people in which everyone grooves their own things and don't interfere with anyone else in doing it. Where people say no because they don't want to and not because of fears or hang-ups. Where people don't make it their business to screw each other up over some decrepit dogma. Where children aren't stunted by education and training into growing up absurd, sad caricatures of their possible selves. where people are free enough and fearless enough to grow their own trees.

If you think this dream is naive and foolish and fantastic, you're right. If you think it neglects and glosses over many of the realities of the present world conditions and that it is a bit pretentious and unlikely given the facts of history, you are right again. And if you can find nothing good or true or beautiful about it, you can go to hell."³⁴

CHAPTER THREE

JOSEPH HELLER AND

THE YOUTHFUL DISAFFILIATES

"What is a country? A country is a piece of land surrounded on all sides by boundaries, usually unnatural. Englishmen are dying for England, Americans are dying for America, Germans are dying for Germany, Russians are dying for Russia. There are now fifty or sixty countries fighting in this war. Surely so many countries can't all be worth dying for."

Heller, Catch-22

Aside from smelling bad, being dirty, spoiled, inarticulate, undisciplined and just generally a pain in the neck, youthful hippies and radicals have been accused of failing to make any significant contributions to the literary or artistic accounts of the times. It's true. The kids haven't written anything worth getting excited about. But there are some qualifications to be made and Jack Newfield does just that in his article, "The Literature of the Movement." Newfield begins his defense by posing questions.

"More and more intellectuals, publishers and writers are asking: 'Where are the literary expressions of the new generation of student radicals? Where is the existential novel of the Berkeley revolt against the impersonal computer? Why hasn't anyone written The Naked and the Dead of the Mississippi freedom Wars?'"¹

He then answers these complaints by explaining

"First, in historical terms, the New Left is ten minutes old, and it is much too early to anticipate a major piece of fiction from such an activist, a-historical and anarchic generation. Second, the intellectual style of the new radicals seems almost to abort the possibility of the novel as their route to expression. They are too much against reason, art, history, symbolism, technique, scholarship, detachment, sometimes even logical thinking itself. The new left kids instead speak of feeling--spontaneity, the existential act, even the saintliness of insanity."²

Newfield's justification for the absence of literary efforts among the radicals speaks for the counter culture as a whole including both the new leftists and the hipster. Generally, reading or writing is not where it's at. Preoccupation with experience, spontaneity, and the here and now lends itself more readily to the rising interest in the film. Thus, the youthful, artistic hope is presently directed toward the production of the great American film rather than the great American novel. Instead of creative-minded freshmen enrolling in short story courses, they are now swamping classes on experimental film making. The transition is dramatically emphasized by the present crisis in the movie making industry. Last year Twentieth Century Fox lost thirty million dollars and Paramount Pictures took a loss of twenty two million.³ The old Hollywood of super-stars, elaborate sets, and spectacular fantasies designed to increase, not fulfill, the unimaginative daydreams of a mesmerized, bored and repressed public is giving way to a new brand of movies based upon a different set of dreams influenced by the growing youth market fascinated by the cinematic experience. As a result, (anyway according to this writer) the movies and the dreams are both improving.

The chocolate covered, multimillion dollar cop-outs like "Paint Your Wagon," or the "Mad Woman of Chaillot" can't survive against the competition of the low budget, personal films like "Easy Rider." What's happening is the kids are paying to see people do their own thing in such flicks as "The Graduate," "Midnight Cowboy," "Alice's Restaurant," and "Good-Bye Columbus."⁴ They are interested in seeing real people acting out real situations and making relevant comments on reality itself instead of neurotically drooling over the emotional perversities of a painted Cleopatra or being put to sleep by a Pollyanna panacea offered by spunky

Doris Day whistling about the virtues of motherhood, the flag and cherry pie. More pointedly, what they pay to see definitely has an effect upon what will be produced because young people between the ages of 16-29 comprise 70% of the box office revenue.⁵

There are plans in the making for the movie adaptation of Herman Hesse's Steppenwolf, Kurt Vonnegut's, Cat's Cradle, in addition to Player Piano and Sirens of Titan. Tolkien's, Lord of the Rings is also scheduled for production. And, Joseph Heller's Catch-22 is soon to be released.⁶ All of these films come from the few books which are still in vogue with the under thirty crowd. Even though being well-read doesn't have the same youthful prestige as it used to, everyone who is hip is familiar with these books. And, to be sure, when the kids do read, they read with the same uncompromising vigor with which they do everything else. Thus, the black humorist, especially Joseph Heller and the romantic story tellers, Hesse and Tolkien are considered to be of the utmost importance since they reflect and reinforce those things so earnestly believed to be true by the youthful counter culture.⁷

Peter Drucker makes a relevant comment in an article he published in Essays Today. He says that, "Ever since adolescence was first invented two hundred years ago in Goethe's Young Werther (incidentally the first international best seller) it has always had a literature it claimed for its very own...This literature always reflects the mood of its generation. It is the young adult's precisely because it says what he feels but is unable to express himself."⁸ The books that are talking for the kids of the 1970's, as already mentioned, are talking about disaffiliation, absurdity, refusal, social involvement, existential choice, myth, mysticism, sensuous life styles, and the saintliness of insanity. But, the myth and magic

makers, Tolkien and Hesse, are generations and continents apart from the American youth. The relationship between these two writers and their new-found youthful audience, therefore, is remote and bears little apparent significance upon the sociological concern of what Herbert Block calls the problem of the writer's "acceptability to his age and the various special-interest groups of his social milieu."⁹ By this I mean to imply that neither the 75 year old English, philologist nor the deceased German Nobel prize winner depended upon American hippies and radicals for their social acceptability.

Joseph Heller and the rest of the black humorists are, however, contemporary and American. And, luckily for their financial well being, they have, referring once again to Block, "a strategic control group, a group who share the underlying conceptions of their work." What's more, they have "captured a mass mood or emotion."¹⁰ To be quite specific, whether they like it or not, the large bulk of these writers' "strategic control group" are the members of the counter culture. The comic writers are expressing what the kids would like to express themselves, the emphatic no of the great refusal. The renowned Ken Kesey, merry prankster, acid-head, beloved and well-read by his followers, in addition to Kurt Vonnegut Jr., Terry Southern, James Purdy, Bruce Jay Friedman, and Joseph Heller, make up most of the motley crew presently putting into works the dark mood of refusal spreading throughout the land or at least throughout the counter culture.¹¹ It's interesting to note that Thomas Pynchon, the only current under-thirty writer of consequence, is also considered to be a black comic. His works can scarcely be said to be anything but representative since they run the gamut all the way from social satire to an other-worldliness of mysterious fantasy.¹²

Except for their "hip strategic control group" the experimental writers in America today usually find themselves quite isolated. Of course this is to be expected. There is, however, a small literary elite interested in them for the purpose of observing the novel as a changing art form.¹³ On this topic I should like to make a few comments. Assuredly, it would be ridiculous, in view of limited space, to attempt a serious discussion. Nevertheless, some facts pertaining to the changing American novel are necessary in providing a background for the investigation of Heller's Catch-22. Let me say that I am well aware the information I am about to impart is considered by those in-the-know practically common knowledge and essentially non-literate. But, without it, Heller would make no sense at all.

In an article by John Aldridge entitled, "Fiction and Mass Culture" attention is drawn to the two major trends in literature which have become, of late, particularly visible. He says that, "The old social novel of the twenties and thirties, as it was written by Fitzgerald, Lewis, Steinbeck, Farrell and Thomas Wolfe (and as John O'hara alone seems still to write) has virtually disappeared, and a strong counter movement is now under way not only towards surrealism and black humor, but toward anti-novelistic experiment and new modes of novelistic self-burlesque and parody."¹⁴ Later he explains this phenomenon by turning to its cultural origin. "The French originators of this anti-novelistic movement all seem to be united in the opinion that the old truths which the novel has traditionally dispensed are no longer imperative truths and that in order to communicate the imperative truths new fictional arrangements of experience are necessary."¹⁵

Stanley Gray also attempts to account for the emergence of the new novel but he goes beyond the notion of new truths, thus new art forms suggested by Aldridge's article. Gray's thesis alleges that, "The purpose

of some of the new novelists is the establishment of a new relationship between author and society and writer and reader."¹⁶ In addition he maintains that "this relationship would invite a more active participation on the reader's part, working against passivity which nourishes his tendency to follow idols or stereotypes."¹⁷ Of most importance is his belief that this new form represents the only "strategy left within a society which has rendered harmless, even thrives on the novels of revolt."¹⁸

If the reader will recall, Gray's explanation for the anti-novel and its siblings, the black humor, the surreal and the anti-hero novel, re-sounds very clearly of Marcuse's conjecture about the technocracy's "absorbent power" to weaken and, in fact, institutionalize any form of protest. These notions, though more high-sounding, closely parallel the interpretation of black humor given by Bruce Jay Friedman in the introduction to the Bantam paper back anthology of several comic writers. Friedman's remarks are priceless; so I won't paraphrase but quote him verbatim. He calls this the "surprise proof generation." He goes on to say

"What might possibly surprise America? Another presidential assassination. Kidstuff. A thousand red Chinese landing on the Lever Brothers building and marching towards Time Square. Hardly worth a yawn. Mike Todd suddenly showing up on the Johnny Carson show, not dead after all, but involved in Broadway's biggest hoax. It's sort of expected."¹⁹

The mood becomes more serious, however, when he talks about the consequences of the "surprise proof generation."

"What has happened is that the satirist has had his ground usurped by the newspaper reporter. The journalist, who in the year 1964, must cover the ecumenical debate whether Jews, on the one hand, are still to be known as Christ-killers or, on the other hand, are to be let off the hook is certainly today's own satirist. The novelist-satirist, with no real territory of his own to roam, has had to sail into darker water somewhere out beyond and I think that is what is meant by Black Humor."²⁰

Combining the ideas of Aldridge, Gray and Friedman, I think it could

be said that, yes, the meaning of the experimental writing is the establishment of a new relationship between the writer and his audience. In order for a protest novel to be effective, the writer must literally reach out and grasp the reader by the throat and make him take seriously that to which he has become immune. This new group of writers are "often working obliquely, coming at (us) from somewhere in Left field, throwing (us) some laughs to get (us) to lower (our) guard," so that we may join the new novelists, "a kind of literary Paul Revere, a fellow who unfreezes his mind, if only for a moment and says, 'For Christ sake, what in the hell is going on here? What do you mean, 35,000 Vietnam advisers?'"²¹

In conclusion, Vance Ramsey in an article on Catch-22 offers the most concise evaluation of the purpose of the new techniques being used in current literature. He writes, "The technique of 'black humor' seems to have evolved in response to the needs of an age whose sensibilities have been largely blunted. As a technique the humor seems to lower the reader's defenses so that the full force of the horror might be felt. In an age which has made a daily companion of horror (so that indifference has become a mode of survival), some change of technique is needed from the naturalistic accumulation of detail, which is designed to tell on the reader by its sheer weight and which is characteristic of most war novels; some new way is required to reach the reader once again and involve him."²²

Yet, appreciation for the vital contribution made by present experimental writing towards the establishment of a new, dynamic relationship between the author and his public, plus the expression of values pertinent to changing times is, by and large, in the minority. Most critics disdainfully view the anti-novel, the anti-hero novel and the black

comic novel as cheap imitators of the theater of the absurd and as a meaningless appendix to the "wasteland theory of literature." They see the black comic novel as nothing but an extension of the sick joke²³ and feel that it is a manifestation of some kind of neurotic obsession. This writer, however, agrees with Robert Scholes when he writes in his book, the Fabulators, that, "Black humor is a sign of health and life." Incidentally, the particular humorist discussed by Scholes is Kurt Vonnegut recently reviewed by Time²⁵, Life,²⁶ Saturday Review,²⁷ The New Republic²⁸ and Newsweek²⁹ as being, among other things, "46 and trusted." In any case, Scholes makes the point that, "One reason why Vonnegut and other black humorist write the way they do (is that) they would like to prevent us from warming ourselves with our secretly virtuous insides while we condone the freezing of others. And as long as we persist in fire bombing other human beings, they would like to blow our cool for us. Comically but relentlessly they seek to make us more thoughtful."³⁰

They say, "No more graceful cop-outs!" It's high time we think about those 35,000 Vietnam advisors. They are shocking us into letting down our guard so that we might feel the consequences of man's losing battle against machines, materialism, bureaucracy, militarism, compromise, status-seeking, and all the other dehumanizing elements of the man's present condition. Cheap imitators or not, they are addressing themselves to the same perspective of the absurd as seen in the shattering works of Albee, Gene, Beckett and Ionesco. Generally, they believe that the absurdity of the human condition is the result of a "society's destruction of individualism, of communication and of being forced to conform to a world of mediocrity."³¹

Another similarity between the absurdists and the American humorists

is that both schools utilize the themes of the polarity of existence to dramatize the utter absurdity of man's current condition. For instance, Samuel Beckett, perhaps the best known absurdist, places stress upon the dichotomies of "sight versus blindness, life and death, time present-time past, body-intellect, waiting-not waiting, going-not going, etc."³² The American humorists, however, restrict themselves mainly to the conflict exemplified by the reactive life style of the counter culture--the battle between emotion over intellect, the abnormal over the normal, the spontaneous over the habitual and the ways of ferment over complacency."³³ They speak for the young when they insist that much of the solution to the modern predicament lies within a style of life characterized by the first of these terms. It is diametrically opposed to mediocrity and would allow for a freer flow of individuality and meaningful communication between men now isolated to the point of near insanity. It is for these reasons that they are desperately urging their audience to take the risk to feel for without feeling man is little more than a machine and thus replaceable.

"It is significant," writes John Aldridge, "that to the extent the young respond to fiction at all, they seem to respond to the kind of fiction now being produced by Nabokov, Barth, Heller and Southern and others, which expresses a distrust of appearances that is comparable to their own and a comic disdain for all those conditions in our world which inhibit their search for aliveness."³⁴ But the question remains, significant of what? Well, to most, Mr. Aldridge included, the search for aliveness by the young and the literature that they read is significant of self-indulgence. The new fiction has been rigidly classified by sociologist Herbert Gans, for one, as private, non-social and uselessly subjective.³⁵ Stylistically, for sure, the new fiction does contain these characteristics. But, we have

seen from the themes already discussed that the breadth of the experimental writing encompasses a larger scope than indicated by the surreal form adopted by the literary turks.

Nevertheless, the artistic form should not be neglected. For as Herbert Block points out, the style and the subject of a work are both indicative of cultural trends.³⁶ In the same article, "Towards the Development of a Sociology of Literary and Art Forms," Block presented four stylistic alternatives open to an artist in chaotic times of non-consensus such as ours. The author may describe inner processes rather than outward events, write journalistically, nostalgically, or turn to the protest novel.³⁷ In keeping with the implication of Gamberg's conclusions, it is decided to categorize the experimental writers as turning inward. As we have already seen, they don't actually typify the conventional novel of dissent for, as Friedman and Ramsey pointed out, they are more concerned with lowering our guard than informing the reader of particular social injustices characteristic of the traditional protest novel. Yet, according to the point of view upheld by this paper, the inner direction is not a sign of social irresponsibility as suggested by Gamberg but instead another instance of disaffiliation, a theme central to the anti-novel, the black humorists and the anti-hero novel.

Literary themes aside, it seems that temporary retreat into self is the sanest selection when people like Rollo May are insisting that in these times of hyper-stimulation personal introspection is imperative for the very protection of inner life.³⁸ Otherwise we will be made deaf by the very noise of things. What's more, the present sense of the absurd demands thoughtful re-assessment of self, society and relationships which we might establish as social animals. Without a re-evaluation of the human psyche and its present place in the non-order of things, the modern

feelings of alienation and loneliness will become unbearable to the extent that men will gladly submit to a machine-like existence just to avoid a confrontation with the anxiety and fear generated by a god-less universe devoid of absolute purpose, order and individual justice.

So, too, that's what it's all about this "self-indulgence" of the experimental writers and their youthful audience, a coming-to-terms with things as they exist now in the year nineteen hundred and seventy. There's no going back. And it makes little sense to live in the future. There's just the present. How do we go about getting what we want when past guidelines for human interaction and meaningful life patterns are no longer viable? In this same vein, Samuel Hirsch in an article on the theater of the absurd quotes Esslin as saying, "Ultimately a phenomena like the theater of the absurd doesn't reflect despair or a return to dark, irrational forces but expresses modern man's endeavor to come to terms with the world in which he lives. It attempts to make him face up to the human condition as it really is, to free him from illusions that are bound to cause constant maladjustment and disappointment. . . . For the dignity of man lies in his ability to face reality in all its senselessness, to accept it freely, with fear, without illusions and laugh at it."³⁹ Perhaps, Ken Kesey's grand, robust character McMurphy sums it up the very best. "You have to laugh at the things that hurt you, just to keep yourself in balance, just to keep the world from driving you plumb crazy."⁴⁰

The young with their funny clothes, sensuous life style and attitude of mockery towards traditional values and norms are laughing even though they often take themselves so dreadfully seriously. Their laughter might not be good down-home, back-slapping humor but it is humor just the same, for they are laughing at a world turned inside out and upside down which still insists upon imposing a superficial order onto the non-order,

making things all the more disorderly. This realization of the existential upside-downness is paramount to the literature of the absurd which, writes Vance Ramsey in an article on Heller's Catch-22, "tears away the apparently ordered surface of reality in order to reveal the chaos and unreason underneath." He continues to comment

Paradox, therefore, is the very essence of the technique of the literature of the absurd. Traditional reason is revealed as unreason because it supposes an ordered, rational world. Sanity in the traditional sense is really insanity; that is, if sanity is the ability to come to terms with reality, then, it is insane to act as if the world is coherent and rational. Loyalty to traditional institutions can be disloyalty to oneself because the institutions may threaten the people they are ostensibly designed to serve."⁴¹

It is reasonable, therefore, that for the absurdists and their young audience, the only logical thing to do is to be anti-war, anti-establishment, anti-heroic, and if you can, write an anti-novel. Nor is it surprising that Joseph Heller's Captain John Yossarian, the craziest of the crazies, is the most loved and emulated fictional character within the ranks of the current disaffiliates for he is anti-war, anti-establishment, anti-heroic and smack in the middle of an anti-novel. Yossarian is, according to Ramsey, "The Kind of character that the term 'anti-hero' should have been reserved for. Many who are given this title are simply 'non-heroes'---weak, ineffectual, little men, little more than anguished consciousness. Yossarian, however, is aggressively, even belligerently, anti-heroic and in his anti-heroism he is a direct challenge to the values and ideals which the world claims to hold."⁴²

How many of the young fantasize themselves as shocking, defying and rebelling against the "capitalistic pigs" by receiving a medal of honor while standing naked in formation or by sitting, still naked, perched in a tree to hear the valorous speeches of absurdity given over

the dead body of a friend killed in war? Yossarian actually carried out these hilarious day dreams of defiance and to him the young shall be eternally gratefully. In so doing he spit in the face of a military-minded society, mocked the institutions of extermination and portrayed, said Robert Brustein in the New Republic, "a new morality, a morality of refusal."⁴³ He is, in short, the grandest anti-hero of the great refusal signifying the essence of the counter culture and of the literature which reflects this new morality. "We would do well," writes Brustein, "to ponder this inverted heroism of the emerging morality."⁴⁴ Conscientious consideration could not help but result in the rearrangement of priorities, norms and values to the extent that the ironic conclusion would be reached that indeed, disengagement is now the most moral choice. Not only is it the most moral but also the most difficult, for it means forfeiting security, social approval, and just generally an easy way out. Yet still, as Yossarian finally decided, it is the only alternative open to those who want to avoid having their fate determined by a merciless mechanism called the great society. Consider the plight of Major Major Major. Does it seem very appealing? Hardly. But, it does in effect, anyway, according to Heller, symbolize the ludicrous, dehumanizing manipulation and eventual ignominious disappearance destined for us all unless we defect.

At first when we see Yossarian censoring all the modifiers out of the enlisted man's letters and signing the name Washington Irving or Irving Washington, he seems to be completely senseless. In fact, no one makes any sense. There's Dunbar who has the theory that life seems longer if filled up with boredom like talking to the dopey Texan. Then there's Orr who walks around with Chestnuts in his cheeks to give a look of innocence. Yet, gradually Heller makes the sane seem insane, the unreal, real and it becomes perfectly reasonable to walk around with chestnuts in one's cheeks.. Just a couple of conversations between Clevinger, the

sane, young patriot and the crazies, Dunbar and Yossarian, should convince even the sanest that it's much more logical to be insane. For instance, take the time Clevinger asks Dunbar the purpose of his boredom trip.

"Well, maybe it's true," Clevinger conceded unwillingly in a subdued tone, "Maybe a long life does have to be filled with many irrational conditions if it's to seem long. But in that event who wants one?"

"I do," Dunbar told him.

"Why?" Clevinger asked.

"What else is there?" said Dunbar.⁴⁵

If the reader is still unconvinced by Heller's unconventional, surreal logic the following conversation between Clevinger and Yossarian leaves little doubt about the sanity of the insane.

"They're trying to kill me," Yossarian told him calmly.

"No one's trying to kill you," Clevinger cried.

"Then why are they shooting at me?" Yossarian asked.

"They're shooting at everyone," Clevinger answered.

"They're trying to kill everyone."

"And what difference does that make?" said Yossarian.⁴⁶

Thus, once Heller has succeeded in convincing the reader that, "1) the lunatic are the most logical and 2) that it is our conventional standards which lack any logical consistency,"⁴⁷ Yossarian's anti-heroic deeds of poisoning the company's food with laundry soap, playing sick, and being lazy and irresponsible in the face of duty become the purest of all possible heroism for they are admirable efforts in the grandest fight of all, the fight to stay alive. They are at the very crux of the matter according to Catch-22 for they mean avoiding being victimized by circumstance. And, this is where it's at for as Heller writes,

"It was a vile, muddy war and Yossarian could have lived without it---lived forever, perhaps. Only a fraction of his countrymen would give their lives for it, and it was not his ambition to be among them....That men would die was a matter of necessity; which men would die, though, was a matter of circumstance and Yossarian was willing to be anything but a victim of circumstance."⁴⁸

Here then, is the central meaning of Catch-22 and from the eyes of Joseph Heller, life itself. It is a struggle to avoid being victimized by circumstance which writes Robert Brustein in an article, "The Logic of Survival in a Lunatic World," is a force represented in the book as "Catch-22".⁴⁹ For the catch, "Catch-22" is the unwritten loophole in every law which empowers the authorities to revoke your rights whenever it suits their cruel whims; it is, in short, the principle of absolute evil in a malevolent, mechanical and incompetent world."⁵⁰ The catch is explained in many clauses in the book but the one which stands out the strongest is the one between Yossarian and Doc Daneeka when they decide that Orr is crazy and should be grounded.

"All he had to do was ask; and as soon as he did, he would no longer be crazy and would have to fly more missions. Orr would be crazy to fly more missions and sane if he didn't, but if he was sane he had to fly them. If he flew them he was crazy and didn't have to; but if he didn't want to he was sane and had to. Yossarian was moved very deeply by the absolute simplicity of this clause of Catch-22 and let out a respectful whistle.

'That's some catch, that Catch-22,' he observed.

'It's the best there is,' Doc Daneeka agreed."⁵¹

Yossarian, then, and all the other men trapped in the wartime life on the small island of Pianosa were caught by "Catch-22". But it's bigger than that because as Brustein says, "Pianosa has become a satirical microcosm for many of the macrocosmic idiocies of our time....Heller has found a way to confront the humbug, hypocrisy, cruelty and sheer stupidity of our mass society."⁵² Therefore, the catch is that we are all caught just like Yossarian by the malevolent law that makes us victims of circumstance.

According to the "Logic of survival, it is a matter of necessity that men must die but it is to a large extent a matter of circumstance how we are to die. It is circumstantial that we die without ever really

being alive. We need not live according to the dictates of an insane social order which says that freedom, joy and spontaneity are abnormal and insane. Nor is it a matter of necessity that we spend our lives half dead, afraid of experiencing openness, authenticity, and love for fear of being left alone, outside the secure approval of a system that rejects those who dare to be human. Except for death and strange, unknown disease, most of the sadness man feels is a matter of circumstance rather than necessity. He is victimized by poverty, war, discrimination, prejudice, loneliness and fear largely because of the circumstances created by a society of lunacy dedicated to economic profit rather than to the fulfillment of human needs and desires. Yet, it need not be. It need not be that men must continue to be victims of circumstances which in actuality they are capable of controlling. How is it that we can reach the moon but still can barely reach out and touch another human being? It's insane for sure. But unless more men dare to risk saying no to the insane, evil forces which make them victims of themselves, we shall see ourselves in the future far from the potential that we might have been if only we had made the moral choice to refuse.

Yossarian was constantly refusing, and at the end he said the final no by not submitting to the compromise which would have let him leave Pianosa and go back to the States. To compromise would have been absurd. It would have meant that all his anti-heroic efforts had been in vain and that he truly was the amoral, despicable individual that his superiors thought him to be. He would have been playing right into their hands. For, it would have been they, rather than he, who would have decided who he was and what his fate would be. Instead, he chose to desert and followed Orr to Sweden. And, according to Ramsey this choice symbolized

the transcendence of the logic of survival, a morality of refusal, into an ethic of social involvement.⁵³

Even though most of the critics agree that this defection to a neutral country is the weakest part of the novel,⁵⁴ this paper is not concerned with literary craftsmanship but with the values expressed by the literature. And, in regard to the Weltanschauung of the book, it is of prime importance that Heller had Yossarian desert to Sweden because it signifies says Frederick Karl in an article, "Only Fools Walk in Darkness," Heller's concern with the good society made by good men."⁵⁵ It means that the book is not just another expression of post-war nihilism, seeing no hope for the absurd condition in which man finds himself. Instead, it is an optimistic commentary on the possibility of man refusing to be a victim of futile conditions which render him incapable of being himself, communicating with others and leading a meaningful existence. In addition, it substantiates the notion that out of alienation comes creativity, for the new morality being talked about by Heller and his youthful readers is seeking to establish a life in which men will be responsible for themselves and will no longer create an individual hell out of each and every man with whom they come in contact.

Thus, this preoccupation with self and social disengagement found within the ranks of the black humorists and the counter culture ultimately represents the most moral and socially responsible choice that authentic men can make in a time when conventional, societal involvement signifies bad faith to one's self and to the very future of human life. In closing, perhaps it might be comforting, in the midst of all this chaos, to place these notions into a familiar framework. Joseph Brewer does this in an article entitled, "The Anti-Hero in Contemporary Literature." He puts the

reader at ease by reminding him of a tradition which is not completely foreign to the Western mind when he traces the seeds of both post-war naturalism and the emerging new fiction to the ideas found in the early nineteenth century romantics. He writes,

"To a man, the romantics insisted upon the worth of the individual, upon the value of knowing one's own motivation. This is precisely what the anti-hero does. He looks down into himself, does not admire what he finds, and then tries to do something about it."⁵⁶

Of course, more shades of romanticism will be seen in the following chapter on Hermann Hesse and J.R.R. Tolkien. But it goes beyond romanticism into a something more. For want of a better name we might call it mysticism. But whatever it is, it has to do with the soul, the inner part or perhaps the esthetic dimension of man which up until now has been largely unexplored except for occasional, brave ventures by some Eastern and very few, Western Mystics. Roszak reminds us that when we begin to "probe the psychic underworld we would do well to remember the distinction R.D. Laing makes between studying and experiencing what we find there;⁵⁷

"The inner does not become outer and outer become inner, just by the discovery of the 'inner world.' That is only the beginning. As a whole generation of men, we are so estranged from the inner world that there are many arguing that it does not exist; and that even if it does exist, it does not matter."⁵⁸

CHAPTER FOUR

HERMANN HESSE, J.R.R. TOLKIEN

AND AMERICA'S DISENCHANTED YOUNG

"I wanted only to try to live in accord with the promptings which came from my true self. Why was that so very difficult?"

Hermann Hesse, Demian

"It was Moses turn. As he stood, he swayed slightly, then held the microphone. His head dropped, and the voice so soft it seemed to stroke us. He wondered if any one of us had read Tolkien's Fellowship of the Rings. 'There is a weariness.... from constant attention to the struggle of good against evil.'"

Sally Belfrage, Freedom Summer

There is a game going around in hip circles called "Who are you?"

It's a gestalt game. Or rather a cross between gestalt therapy and Taoism since gestalt itself is fundamentally a species of that particular branch of Zen Buddhism.¹ The game is played by one person in the group asking another, "Who are you?" The person being questioned answers, I am and then says whatever comes to mind at the moment. The questioner replies, thank you and asks the question once again. So it goes, ostensibly allowing the person being quized to go deeper and deeper into himself getting a feel for what he's basically all about.

It's a good game. That is, if you share the perspective that being in touch with one's feelings is the core of health, happiness and well being. To those people who are hip, this is definitely where it's at, knowing how you really feel about yourself and your relationship to what's happening around you. Thus, the goal is ultimately being able to

achieve harmony with the "total ecological pattern," clinically called "the organism environment field" or mystically named, "Lao-Tzu's Way." All of which means a blending, a flowing, a oneness of spirit with the surrounding "cosmic forces."² Translation, good vibes.

In any case, this is, writes Robert Sklar in an article, "Tolkien and Hesse: Top of the Pops", why the kids love Hesse. Book after book he addresses himself to that universal, soul searching stumper, "Who Am I?"³ But yet, it goes deeper than that, their affinity with the deceased German guru. Perhaps a combination of a lot of factors can explain this alliance which at first glance appears so peculiar. Both Hesse and his turned-on readers are attracted to Oriental mysticism, psychoanalytic thinking and just generally the exciting probe into the mysterious underworld of the human psyche's inner life.⁴ The search, they say, leads to the uncovering of beatific visions, imaginative fantasies, perceptive instincts, extra-sensory techniques and creative insights which can't possibly be experienced in the outer world but must be discovered individually by an exploration into the inner self resulting in the acquisition of a whole new dimension giving meaning and color to the insignificant daily occurrences called reality.

It might be of interest to note that Hesse was one of the first major writers ever to be analyzed. This experience, of course, had a large influence on his work. As a matter of fact, an excellent topic for investigation could be Hermann Hesse and the Psychology of Literature. But, for our purposes the fundamental notion shared by Hesse and his master, C. G. Jung, is certainly sufficient. Both men believed that, "The tree of life grew in orchards outside reason and that the soul would find its home in caverns measureless to man."⁵ How clearly this resounds of the

counter culture. It is "shot through" with the consciousness and culture of the American young. Feelings, not reason, emotion not intellect, these are the capacities where man might finally reach fulfillment. Here, then, lies the bond between Hesse and the counter culture. An article in the Saturday Review by Henry Resnik entitled, "How Hermann Hesse Speaks to The College Generation," presents a germane summation of this analogy.

Hesse's overriding anti-intellectualism must be just as attractive as his themes and plots. Whether it be the sensual Goldmund, the drug happy Pablo in Steppenwolf or the Ferryman in Siddhartha, Hesse determinedly contrasts the more cerebral, conventional culture with another culture that is essentially mystical, spiritual, inarticulate or magical.⁶

Thus, once again we come across another manifestation of the polarities representing the forces of death and re-birth as portrayed in the arch-type offered by Traschen.

The anti-intellectualism, the emphasis upon feelings and the contrast between the dying, cerebral culture and the emerging order of the spirit are, as Resnik mentioned, the constant overtones in Hesse's writings. The themes and the plots, he points out, are also repetative. Book after book, there is the same recurring "tale to be told".⁷ He continues this observation by writing

More pattenly than most novelists, Hesse was writing the same story over and over again: well-behaved, middle class boy (Steppenwolf; Sinclair in Demian; Siddhartha; Narcissus in Narcissus and Goldmund) encounters mysteriously tempting outside influences (SDS, 'non-students' Demian Buddha, Goldmund) opposes the established order, takes either an actual or imaginary spiritual journey and grows up. Now a whole generation of rebels can identify with Sinclair and believe that the Mark of Cain might just be a stigma imposed by an uptight society; a so-called generation can journey to the East and smoke pot with Buddha; a whole what-you-call-it freak out in the Magic Theater with old buddy Steppenwolf.⁸

To substantiate the obvious appeal of Hesse's recurrent stories about disenchanted youth for the present generation of America's disgruntled young, Resnik interprets a couple of more quotes from the German guru.

"The Steppenwolf, we learn, in Hesse's introduction to the novel was, 'brought up by devoted but severe and very pious parents and teachers in accordance with the doctrine that makes the breaking of the will the cornerstone of education and upbringing.' Every frustrated youth in groovy America must feel the truth of that observation. Or, also in Steppenwolf, 'For what I always hated and detested and cursed above all things was this contentment, this healthiness and comfort, this carefully preserved optimism of the middle class, this fat and prosperous brood of mediocrity.' What nice suburban kid with half a brain can read these passages and fail to recognize his own condition? No wonder Steppenwolf is their favorite."⁹

The close analogy between Hesse's characters and the hip people on the U.S. scene is made even more apparent by Resnik's comments on Knecht, the successful dropout who is the Magister Ludi, the Master of the Glass Bead Game.

'I don't want to be a prudent reveler taking a bit of look at the world, 'Knecht tells the president of the Order as he resigns his office and refuses the option to return if he should change his mind, "On the contrary, I crave risk, difficulty and danger; I am hungry for reality, for tasks, and deeds, and also for deprivation and suffering.' Every college student who knows that his degree qualifies him for a lifetime job with IBM must want to say these very words at some point in his life."¹⁰

Quite obviously, then, there is more in Hesse for the kids to identify with than mysticism, reaction against the cerebral and celebration of emotion. He is writing about that universal phenomena of adolescent awakening.¹¹ Thus, to a certain extent his work is periodless, for it has - borrowing a term from Block - "survival-capacity". This merely means that a work of art portrays "recurrent value situations" never ending in the annals of human history.¹² For instance, consider the following quotation

I know that we human beings were not created equal and cannot be but I am of the opinion that he who keeps aloof from the so-called rabble in order to preserve the respect he feels is his due is just as reprehensible as the coward who hides from his enemies because he fears to be defeated by them.¹³

No, it's not a passage from Hesse. But it certainly could be. Instead it is a remark made by Goethe two hundred years ago in the Sorrows of Young Werther. If the reader will recall, according to Peter Drucker, this was the first international best seller written in the period when adolescence was first realized as a sociological phenomena. The notion and substantiation of recurrent value situations is comforting even if signifying nothing other than the idea that there is, after all, some continuity to the human experience. Eugene Timpe in an article, "Hermann Hesse in the United States," published in Symposium made some comments along these lines.

The matter of a general appeal to youth is most obvious. It has always been in the nature of the young to revolt against the weight of tradition, nowadays called the establishment and Hesse's preoccupation with the awakening of spring and his almost inevitable depiction of the perennial revolt against authority offer a good deal with which to identify. As one student recently wrote in a class paper, 'he writes about the troubled people trying to maintain individuality in a society which forces conformity.' They can see themselves as Goldmund or Demian in a revolt against the father image and that which it symbolized or better yet, as Hans Giebenrath, subjected to the system, forced into a mold, the spirit and intelligence crushed. They can even identify with Harry Haller, insofar at least as he expresses the attempt to free himself from the constraints of conformity. They applaud his reverence for life and his treatment of war. And, prompted by their doctrine of love and by a sense of insecurity they sympathize with Hesse's intense humanism.¹⁴

However, not all the critics are as sympathetic with Hesse and his turned-on readers as have been Resnik, Sklar and Timpe. Apparently, verbal attacks on Hesse and the youthful philistines is currently good sport and

open game in literary circles. The gentle cynicism found in Resnik is not even in the running. George Steiner of the New Yorker displays a version of the quiet but fashionable under-the-table gig when he poses the question, "why the Hesse vogue?" and then answers, "Possibly a fairly rude, simple answer is in order. The young have read very little and compared less. Stringency is not their forte. Like prayer bells and beads, like pot and love-ins, Hesse seems to offer ecstasy and transcendence on the easy payment plan."¹⁵ Stephen Koch of the New Republic shows a more straightforward style accentuated by a long-winded attack upon the poor dead man himself. Of Hesse, the literary Nobel prize winner, Koch, the reviewer of books, says

Like everything else in his work, Hesse's thought is irretrievably adolescent. . . . Almost without exception Hesse's ideas are derivative, schoolboyish, traditional to the point of being academic, influenced by all the right people and boringly correct. Life for instance, is divided into Many Dualisms which cause much Unhappiness. There is Intellect versus Senses; Passion versus Thought; Good versus Evil: Self versus All; Male versus Female; Yin versus Yang. It is a terrific experience to transcend these Dualisms and make them fuse. Likewise, the self is limiting; it is a Terrific Experience to forget the brain and let the Sense take over. Good and Evil are all mixed up together, but they are both Terrific Experiences. The All is wonderful. Each of us has a Steppenwolf inside. The world-Soul is androgyne. Sex can be wild."¹⁶

So it goes-----on and on and on. But it's not, all for not. Something is learned. If ever you have the misfortune to attend a cocktail party of New York's beautiful, over-thirty people, an appropriate topic of conversation would be the merits of Thomas Mann as opposed to the demerits of Hermann Hesse. ~~On the other hand, if at a happening down in~~ East Village, the rhetoric would be reversed. In these circles, Thomas Mann is square since he sees the East as the danger zone which must be warded off.¹⁷ Whereas Hesse, he is indeed groovy with his "eschatological third kingdom" transforming itself into something else.¹⁸

In any case, we know what we need to know for the purpose of this paper. Hermann Hesse is definitely Hip. Whether or not his ideas or literary accomplishments are of any merit to the merit makers, is of no concern to us. What is important is, writes unfashionable Webster Schott of Life, "In Hesse youth sees itself unchained, kicking the past and burying parental authority, wandering through forests on trips to illumination, pulled between thinking and feeling."¹⁹ In fact, the German guru's romantic tales encompass the spirit of the counter culture all the way from disaffiliation to mysticism. Let me give two final passages to complete the picture. First, the statement from Steppenwolf on the Divine Laughter, and second, a comment on insanity in Diary From a Health Resort.

"To live in a world as if it were not the world, to respect the law and yet to stand above it, to possess as if one did not possess, to renounce as if it were no renunciation at all, all this only humor is capable of achieving."²⁰

"Such was the courage of Nietzsche who had dared to ask the question whether under certain conditions it was not worthier, nobler and more proper to become psychopathic than to adjust oneself to these conditions by sacrificing one's ideals."²¹

When it comes to sex, however, Hesse and his hip audience part company. For Hesse, the amorality of Zen received a Christian interpretation thus conveying an ethos of "ethereal asexuality" so popular in the twenties and thirties. The kids, on the other hand, adopted Kerouac's and Ginsberg's beat Zen "wealthy in the hyperbolic eroticism the religion brought with it rather indiscriminately from the Kamasutra and Tantric tradition."²² This "brand of modish Zen" brought forth from Alan Watts the quiet criticism that it . . . "confuses anything goes on the existential level to anything goes on the artistic and social level."²³ He goes on to say that such a vulgarization of Zen could easily become the banner of

The cool, fake-intellectual hipster searching for kicks, name dropping bits of Zen and Jazz jargon to Justify disaffiliation from society which is in fact just ordinary, callous exploitation of other people....Such types are, however, the shadow of substance, the low-level caricature which always attends spiritual and cultural movements carrying them to an extreme which their authors never intended. To this extent, Zen is sowing confusion in idealizing in art and life what is better kept to oneself as therapy.²⁴

As would be expected, Theodore Roszak was well aware of this failing and quickly comes to the defense of his counter culture's naive and shallow experimentation in the ways of Zen Masters. He wrote,

Perhaps what the young took Zen to be has little relationship to that venerable and elusive tradition; but what they readily adopted was a gentle and gay rejection of the positivistic and cerebral. It was the beginning of a youth culture that continues to be shot through with the spontaneous urge to counter the joyless, rapacious and egomaniacal order of our technocratic society.²⁵

Roszak, of course, is correct. It is the sociological implications of youth's abortive attempts to be mystic rather than an analysis of the aesthetics purity of their spiritual endeavors that bears significance. Their interpretation of mysticism, through Hesse or otherwise, was another instance of a reaction against the "cerebral." Yet, this is too abstract. You need to read Demian by Hesse and see how you feel afterwards. Empty, dull and stupid. It'll take you back to times past when people, books and happenings were still exciting, unique and something extra special. Mid way through the book you'll find yourself rationalizing your matter-of-fact reaction to Hesse's constant ecstasy for the world around him by blaming ~~it on Demian, the central character. After all, he's only an adolescent~~ and this is the way all adolescents see thing---uncritically, with a naive and uninformed fascination. But then upon finishing the book, you'll have the unfortunate feeling that the "mystery of life" is long

gone for those past the bewitching years of thirty.

This is, of course, one of the irksome tenets of the counter culture. People over thirty are not to be trusted since, in one way or another, they've sold out. They are, then, no longer in touch with life's fundamental issues but all hung up with the distractive trivia which the establishment passes off as relevant. The most disgusting of the spiritually impoverished sell-outs are the poor up-tight liberals who are constantly pushing themselves off as the authorities on everything. Even more absurd, if the intellectual elite are as bright as they say they are, how come they allowed themselves to be co-opted into that cut-off place of unimaginative rationality? But that's where they are all right, hiding beneath a pile of academic muck. It's safe there. And, when they have to come out they use their self-righteous ethic of social liberalism as protection. They have, in short, produced nothing but the most cerebral of self defense mechanisms.

The intellectual's reasoned world view comes all packaged with the proper conditioned responses, answers and behavioral alternatives equipped to master any situation. Nothing is immune to their analytical classification according to the intellectual concepts of class, status, occupation, education, childhood environment, psychological motivation etc. Thus every new person that they meet is quickly translated into the consequence of a whole range of variables, completely predictable and understandable. To them, there are no strange and special people but instead a pre-determined collection of personality and behavioral patterns.

The kids are fond of pointing out that this isn't a very interesting way to go through life. Not only is it boring, but wrong. There's a dimension to the human condition which transcends reason and transforms

the world into the unique and exciting place, that it was meant to be. But, say the youthful mystics, it'll make little difference to most Americans. Not unless they come out from underneath their cerebral defenses of intellectually explaining away everyone they meet, everything they feel and every dream which can never be realized. They'll just continue to go along mind-fucking one another, dumping their hostilities on each other's backs and wondering why the human condition is so damn absurd.

The only solution, proclaims the prophetic voice of youth, is to get straight, dump your defenses and be honest with yourself and those around you. Go down into that inner place and find out what you really feel and want. Next, and most important, is to act upon these feelings. Whole new worlds will open up because for the first time you will be alive. They then might quote to you the words of their German guru, "The true profession of man is to find his way to himself." If he shirks this responsibility, life will have no meaning, joy or mystery.

The position, then of the young is not one of ideology but instead a kind of psychological mystagogy. It is their belief that without some serious psychological renovations, no amount of social change can cure the evils that modern man is feeling.²⁶ Granted, the black man, the brown man and the poor, white man might be made middle class, part of the establishment. And, of course, this is good. It is most important. Yet, it has no meaning if once the disinherited reach the promised land, they find nothing but a new and different kind of deprivation. There's a something more that can't be legislated. It's whole new way of life, a way of knowing, a way of feeling, read Hesse, they say, and he'll help you understand. It's a personal thing. It can't be talked about,

explained, or taught; it has to be experienced through feeling because feeling is where it's at.

Next, they say read J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings and maybe he'll give you a borrowed sense for the spirit of the counter culture. Why Tolkien? There are several reasons but the main ones don't pertain to the mystical or psychological inner probe as found in Hesse. Instead, curiously enough, the mood is one of an existential call for decisive action and commitment.²⁷ The reader might be wondering, how's this? How could a mythical fantasy have any relationship to the human condition demanding choice, action and decision-making? Robert Sklar provides part of the answer when he writes, "What is most important about (the Lord of The Rings) is not that it serves as an escape or lends to contemplation, or makes for livelier dreams, but that it provides a paradigm for action. It asks not who you are, or your pedigree, or your past associations, but simply states; this is the task; are you willing to carry it through?"²⁸ Therefore, the true moral drama of the Lord of the Rings is the fact that the small band of hobbits called upon to leave their comfortable life, undergo dangers and destroy the evil ring of power made the choice to embrace their task and were willing to take the risk to carry it through, to act. Here is the challenge and the response which appeals to the present generation of Tolkien fans.²⁹

It makes sense then that a strong bond can be found between these wee creatures and the American young since both groups see themselves as a chosen band "called upon to leave behind a way of life equally as self serving and oblivious to social truths."³⁰ Dramatically, the kids role play the moral drama of the trilogy because they feel for them too, "their moment on the great stage of history has come: to act, to dare, to

be brave, to endure hardships, risk their lives and lose forever their comfort and anonymity."³¹ "Above all", writes Sklar, "what matters is the act of choosing to take part, or participating in the company with others."³² This is he says, "a significant, distinguishing feature of the present generation of youth---not to take refuge in private life, or in institutions, or in dogmas but to become involved in life."³³ Yet the reader should be reminded that being involved in life according to the under-thirty generation does not mean being socially involved as it is conventionally defined, but it signifies, instead, leaving behind an old way of life made unviable by the course of history and striking out with a band of like-minded hobbits to rid the world of the evil ring of power so that there might evolve a new and authentic life style where love, not power, becomes the predominant force around which men structure their lives.

In addition to the symbolic act of existential choice and commitment the kids are equally attracted to Tolkien's clear cut picture of good and evil. Joseph Mathewson in an article, "The Hobbit Habit" suggests that perhaps, "the great appeal of the Tolkien books may be that they offer both, not only page after page of far away middle earth, but also the victory of good over evil where the lines are clearly drawn as they ever were in Selma, Alabama. The little old Negro woman who wants to vote is good and the redneck sheriff who keeps her from it is bad."³⁴ Or, as the editor of Bantam books put it in a discussion with Philip Norman of the New York Times, "Young people today are interested in power and in working out the conflict of good and evil. Here in Tolkien it is all worked out for them."³⁵ The trilogy draws the issues in unequivocal terms where there is no room for compromise. Obviously, this moral certainty would

appeal to the youthful disaffiliates who already have established the unfortunate reputation of being particularly fond of the good guys - bad guys point of view.

Yet, this affinity of the young for the heroic and villainous type characters found in Tolkien's myths suggest a contradiction in the overall perspective of the counter culture since it is only in Tolkien that this value of moral certainty is reflected. The other books that the young have claimed to speak for them take the position of not knowing, of questioning and then trying to find the correct, individual solution to the particular isolated problem. This is especially true of the American Humorists. They are for the most part pretty relativistic in the sense that Friedman writes, "I am not sure of very much and I think it is true of the writers in this volume that they aren't sure of very much either."³⁶ Or as Robert Scholes writes in the Tabulators, "In Vonnegut, as in his contemporaries, we do not find a rhetoric of moral certainty, which has generally been a distinguishing characteristic of the satirical tradition. The writers of the dark comedy do not seek the position of the traditional moralist."³⁷

Regardless of Tolkien and as already mentioned, the kids definitely do present an image of having all the answers. Thus, we refer to them as having chiliastic fervor etc. Perhaps this certainly is a phenomenon restricted to a small minority within a minority, or an instance of youthful enthusiasm, or just another picture that appeals to the media. I don't know. But, it just might be that deep down in their hearts most of the kids feel the same as James Kunen, a nineteen year old radical who suggests feelings far from certainty in his "The Journal of a Gentle Revolutionary." He writes, "She asked me if I saw one side or two sides. I said I saw two sides. In fact, I said, that's why I can't be close with the radicals

sometimes. I just don't feel as sure of myself as they seem to."³⁸ It seems much more likely to the writer that Kunen, as opposed to somebody like Mark Rudd, presents a stereotype which comes closer to the typical under-thirty rebel. Although the good guys - bad guys point of view is appealing and in some instances valid as with the old Negro woman and the redneck sheriff, I think the kids usually feel pretty scared, ambiguous and damn unhappy that there are no definite guidelines concerning the questions of good and evil. However, in the midst of all this uncertainty about certainty, one thing is apparent: the books, Heller, Hesse and Tolkien and the kids from the weathermen to the flower children are all ethically and morally preoccupied.

Edward Luci-Smith, in an article published in the New Statesmen entitled, "Ovid Where Are You?" made a relevant comment in regard to the above confusion. "Myths as such are ambiguous and allow us to believe a good many different and self-contradictory things at once. That perhaps is their power---that they ease us over the contradictions."³⁹ But still there is more to the power of myths than just "easing us over the contradictions." They are, if you will, a revitalizing or rejuvenating force, for they provide a momentary glance into the utopian situations where problems are solved according to the easy answers of the way things "should be" as opposed to the complex solutions derived in the real world of having to deal with all the existing, concrete factors constantly in conflict. This occasional glance into utopia is imperative. Otherwise, man could easily forget how it is that things "should be" and would thus limit himself entirely to the down hill slide of practical problem solving.

Take for instance, the concept of power as an example of the utopian and yet contradictory thinking stimulated by myth. On the one hand,

the kids see it in Tolkien as it "should be" seen as evil. If this sounds naive, then you too are evil, having gone beyond the point of being able to see it as anything but the omnipotent bargaining force all powerful in the world as we now know it. You have become jaded to the corruption, manipulation, exploitation and hate that it fosters in personal relationships and more obviously on the national and inter-national scene. You have, in short, surrendered to "Catch-22." Yet luckily some still realize that because of this malevolent force people and nations can never get close, never find peace, being too busy trying to win the power play of personal and national one-ups-manship. On the other hand, though, the kids are fighting for power, student power, flower power, etc. Contradictory, yes. But nevertheless it is still a reality which has to be dealt with. They haven't, however, as is affirmed by Tolkien, given up the hope, as have most of us, that someday power might be negated and mitigated to the point of non-existence, the way things "should be." As long as man maintains the promise of utopian thinking, the future of humanity remains bright. On the contrary, as soon as it's forgotten we relinquish our chance for ever attaining the best of all possible worlds. We must always keep in mind the notion talked about by Nietzsche in the Birth of Tragedy.

Without myth every culture loses its healthy, creative natural power; it is only a horizon encompassed with myths that rounds off to unity a social movement. It is only myth that frees all the powers of the imagination from aimless wanderings....the mythless man remains eternally hungering amid the past and digs for grubs and roots.⁴⁰

Of course, the most obvious connection between Tolkien's myths and the American young is that the fantasy, imagination and other-worldliness of middle earth reflect the ethereal, mystical mood enjoyed by the turned-on hip people of the counter culture. Anyone who's really hip knows that,

"It does everyone good to stay in Tolkien's world, where things are green; where there is hope for peace and pleasantness."⁴¹ Middle earth, then, is also like all myths, a form of escape, a place to go when weary of the starkness of the real world of complex people, problems and society. It is a brief refuge from an age in which the great men of the times are assassinated by a sick, insane society. An age which makes mockery of heroism, humanism and brotherhood. An age in which human kindness is interpreted as self-interest. An age in which human love is psychologized into self-love. An age in which dreams have become deviations. An age in which a "solitude has begun for each and every man."

Indeed, it is vital for the human soul to rest awhile away from the strange and lonely times in which we live----a time of cynicism, idol smashing, debunking and a realism so stark as to make one numb from the cruelty of its bluntness. What a relief and how comfortably cosy to settle down with a small, simple and hospitable hobbit who's fond of beer, good food and pipe smoking. With these fuzzy feet creatures the nice things of life can be enjoyed. For they "Love peace, and quiet and a good titled earth; a well ordered country-side was their favorite haunt. They do not understand or like machines more complicated than a forge bellows, a water mill or a loom."⁴² Thus, after coming back from this trip into another world, back into the frantic hustle, bustle generated by the people, products and problems of our technological existence, it can be realized that things need not be the way they are. There are other alternatives. We need not be completely caught by "Catch-22".

Some might think that it is inconsistent for the young Dioynisian joy makers to enjoy the peace and quiet of middle earth. This is not true, for the sensuous life style that they value need not be loud and boisterous

but may be soft and lazy living mainly for the feel of things like the simple hedonism experienced by the non-adventurous hobbits. And as Donald Davie said in an article in Encounter, "The whole vast work tends to one end---to the elevation of the common man, of the private soldier over his officers and the school boy over his schoolmasters, of the sensual man over the intellectual."⁴³ Here again we have another reappearance of the fundamental conflict between the cerebral and the sensual. In the same article Davie not only draws this analogy but suggests that Tolkien even provides the youthful reader with a vast range of anti-heroes to emulate. He writes, "The driving force of the book is unheroic, even anti-heroic. Heroes are not to be trusted, only anti-heroes. The heroes have the style of authority. They are always looking 'stern and grave.'"⁴⁴ Davie then schizes off into a highly theoretical discussion differentiating between power and authority which seems to be entirely his own trip because I really don't think anyone but Davie takes the Lord of the Rings to be a serious academic discourse on power politics but rather a fable telling the tale of how even the most simple and pure can be corrupted by the evil of power.

Davie, however, is not the only one who wants to distort Tolkien's delightful romantic myth into a complicated intellectual undertaking. The fact that Tolkien himself is constantly denying the obscure allegorical references that scholars are endeavoring to pull out of middle earth, does not discourage the persistent academicians bent upon applying their cerebral standards to everything from love making to toilet training. William Ratliff and Charles Flinn in an article the "Hobbit and Hippie" published in the esoteric Journal Modern Age, display their grand intellectual capacities by proudly announcing that, "The young have embraced

a book with a view of the universe and a creatures' place within it which is distinctly opposed to their prevailing philosophy."⁴⁵ The elaborate interpretation of Tolkien which they then give to support their opinion might well be correct. Yet, it doesn't prove anything except the kids have sloppy reading habits and that they, Ratliff and Flinn, have no sense for what the young are all about and should not have bothered to write the article in the first place. No matter what any academician wants to make of it, Tolkien is to the kids a commentary on existential choice, action and involvement, disaffiliation, reaction against the cerebral and a celebration of feeling, mystery and magic. These are the values of the counter culture which Tolkien's Lord of the Rings, one way or the other, reflects and reinforces.

CONCLUSION

By reviewing the writings of Joseph Heller, Hermann Hesse and J.R.R. Tolkien we should have attained a second-hand sense for one of the most publicized moods on the modern scene. What's more, in spite of the future significance, the present maturity or the purity of its motivation, I feel the mood derived from this subjective inquiry into the sociology of literature comes closest to "accurately" describing the way a large portion of the American young are feeling about themselves, the alternative open to them and the current state of their surrounding environment. It's hard to tell what's really going on in any segment of life in these times of spectacular news coverage, conflicting ideologies and just general confusion and dissent. As I wrote this paper I was well aware of the violence in Santa Barbara, the bombings in New York and on the other hand the childish vies for attention and party making reflected in incidents like the tree escapade here on our own campus. Yet these instances of violence and adolescent frivolity are predictable. No movement, no mood, no group of varied individuals can be expected to remain entirely and continually consistent. These outbursts of violence and childishness should then be realized as inconsistent deviations from an over-all effort by a large part of the American young to peacefully improve and change the value structure and the life style of the society in which we live.

The spirit of the counter culture is real, not just an advertising gimmick, a passing fancy or an adolescent phase of growing up but it is the most reasonable response which people still hopeful could have to the direction our society is moving. The wrong direction. It's wrong to be in Vietnam, even more wrong to be in Cambodia. It's wrong to maintain ghettos,

discrimination, prejudice and poverty. It's wrong to foster ulcers, mental illness, alienation and loneliness. It's all wrong to continue the role of policing the world because we will not suffer, to quote the President, "humiliation and defeat." Unless we change this role, unless we become more peaceful, satisfied and sharing, we will be defeated anyway. First, we shall be defeated by our own selfish, "unfeeling" style of life. And second, we shall be eventually defeated by the rising third world who will no longer tolerate the exploitation, manipulation and prejudice which our great society radiates.

These statements are, of course, subjective just as this has been a subjective study and yet I feel that they are none the less significant because of their subjectivity. On the contrary, I see them as being in closer touch with current events than dry data unrelated to the outside world where public issues and personal problems still result from individual considerations even if these considerations are restricted to those few men in high places. Regardless of the guise of scientific objectivity, it is essentially a subjective choice that we are in Cambodia, or that we choose the conquest of the moon instead of poverty, or that we prefer the role of policemen rather than humanitarians. These are all ideological decisions which shall determine the fate of future generations. If we are to be victimized without having any choice, it is not quite as dehumanizing to know that at least we were alive and fighting during the course of that process of victimization. We will not, however, even be aware of this process if we choose to hide behind the defense of objective detachment.

Some issues demand that we come out and look around. The counter culture and all it stands for is one of these issues. One concrete example of the distortion resulting from the misplaced application of detached

observation is a particular study conducted on the phenomena of youthful dissent by two social scientists named Rigney and Smith. They concluded from their ink blot tests, questionnaires, and interviews that the counter culture (the earlier beat version of it) was a therapeutic community of individuals working together trying to rid themselves of that social disease clinically known as maladjustment.¹ Now, of course, it is largely a matter of personal preference as to whether or not one agrees with Mr. Rigney and Mr. Smith. But, I am more willing to put my trust into the entirely subjective social insights of Joseph Heller than two myopic social scientists who proclaimed that-no, beat didn't mean beatitude because their questionnaires failed to confirm any conventional religious affiliations on the part of those deviants being questioned.²

Rigney and Smith do, of course, present an exaggerated incident. The fact remains, however, that there are areas of the human experience which are not tube testable. When placed under the microscope, they fade away, lose meaning; and, therefore, no knowledge is gained. These areas shall we call them the spiritual or soul-like dimensions of man should best be left to the intuitive, soft approaches of literature and art.

It is believed that if a stranger, perceptive but uninformed about the current American scene, were to read Catch-22, The Lord of the Rings, and Demian, he would be able to understand our nation's youth better than the intellectual and scientific techniques unequipped to measure the spirit of a man, an age or a nation.

FOOTNOTES

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

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