

## ***The "Youth Protest" and the "Age of Creativity"\****

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The protest of youth is considered today as the most important social phenomenon characterizing the passing decade. Numerous papers and surveys have attempted to analyze this phenomenon from various angles. Some try to explain the "youth protest" of the 1960's as a morbid symptom, as a romantic reaction to the technological advancement, as a sign pointing to the degeneration and deterioration of Western civilization, and so on. Anyone experienced in psychiatry or psychology cannot but reject such statements, for the simple reason that the young are usually the least *vulnerable* layer of society; and in a case of reaction, degeneration, or deterioration of a culture they are certainly the last to be affected and no social malady can ever find its origin among the young. On the other hand, a characteristic of youth throughout the ages in every culture is its sensitivity and openness to any forthcoming social or cultural change. In every transitional stage of the development of a culture, when "the ground begins to shake" and the new begins to emerge from beneath calm layers of the established order, it is youth that senses it first, reacts and even devotes itself to the new-born. Thus, we are able to view the behavior of youth as though it were a magnifying glass through which the rapid changes can be seen in the making.

Erikson pointed out the fact that the patterns and method of education typical to a certain culture consist of a sort of

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"unconscious planning" according to which the society educates and moulds its members to best fulfill its demands. The particular circumstances of each historical period and each cultural unit determine the traits required of its members in order to allow them maximal chances of survival, adaptation to their environment, and propagation of their values in future generations. For example, a nation whose survival depends on agricultural development requires adults with different traits than those needed by a nation whose future depends upon industrial development. And, since the culture's needs change with the passage of time, the patterns of education must undergo a continuous process of change and renewal in order to meet these changing needs. According to this rule, one can see the recent change in educational patterns and in the ideals of today's youth as a result of a cultural upheaval calling for new members possessing different traits from those cultivated by the process of education up to the present. To gain a better understanding of this recent change let us take a short detour to survey the main historical changes from the pre-industrial era to the present.

THE  
PRE-INDUSTRIAL  
ERA

Man's survival in the time of Greece and Rome, the Middle Ages, up to the end of the Feudal Age, as at all times, depended on his success in the struggle he fought on two different fronts — the one against nature, and the other against man. In his battle against nature he had to work hard, to produce his own food and other vital needs, and to learn to live with all the calamities that befell him, such as disease, flood, famine, etc. On the other battlefield he had to defend himself against his fellow men who tried to steal and destroy him, his land, and the fruits of his labor. Against nature he was weak and powerless. The labor he put into producing his most basic means of survival consumed his time, disease devoured him, and his life expectancy was no more than 20 years, and even those were full of physical suffering and illness. Since he possessed few means for controlling nature, for eradicating disease, or lessening his physical suffering, he was able to maintain his physical and mental existence only by reconciling himself to the surroundings in which he lived.

In his second struggle, his survival depended upon his joining others in organizing into a large group in which the work was clearly divided between those whose task it was to fight and those whose task it was to provide the needs of the group. Military strength in those days was dependent

upon the number of men who were willing to march as a group for the same cause. An example of such power was the Greek Phalanx, the strength of which lay in the fact that thousands of soldiers fought as a single unit, where each soldier was only a brick in the advancing living wall that overran the enemy. It is clear that in a military formation such as this, the strength of the group relies upon the individual's renouncement of all individuality and personal initiative, where any deviation from the ranks results in weakening the entire unit.

The human traits essential to the survival of man and his culture at that time were reconciliation, constancy, a static maintenance of all existing values, and the renunciation of all individuality and personal initiative.

The various social systems and religions cultivated and safeguarded these values by sanctifying the static, the stable, and the immutable and by their struggle against any attempt to overthrow or undermine the existing order. The different religions and philosophies provided their believers with various *Weltanschauungen* from which their believers learned how to preserve their spiritual existence in spite of their physical suffering by either isolating the mind from the body, or by regarding all physical suffering as a mere purification of the soul and so on. It is no wonder that, until recent times, such philosophies still flourished in countries like India, countries where thousands used to perish every year from disease and hunger, while the only relief from suffering was adherence to a philosophy of acceptance.

The permanent, the stable, the unchangeable, the blessing of any constancy were reflected in the various religions and philosophies which based their beliefs on the teachings of a leader or a prophet from some distant past. All that man need know, all the answers to life's diverse problems, were all said or written either in the Bible, the New Testament, the Koran, or by Aristotle, Confucius, Buddha and other ancients. All that man must do is learn and study these works of wisdom and abide by them without deviating or attempting to alter them. And if exile was the fate of those who showed personal initiative, or if those who dared to deviate in their opinions were burned, this was not a result of "ignorance" or "primitivism" on the part of the culture, but rather a result of the self-preserving instinct in a culture that treated any expression of originality as a threat to its very existence.

The human ideal that served as a basis for all the educational systems in those days was embodied in the image of

the *wise man*, the man who memorized and studied and knew the teachings of his forefathers and who never changed them nor invented anything new. The methods of education and learning were all based on this ideal and consisted mainly of repetition and study of the sources. The "good student" was the one who knew more of the sources by heart than the others.

THE  
INDUSTRIAL  
ERA

The beginning of the Industrial era is marked by man's rebellion against his passive submission to nature, and the conclusion arrived with his almost complete victory over nature in learning to master and subject it to the fulfillment of his own needs. Man started developing the sciences, studying the laws of nature, and using this newly gained knowledge in the formation of a technology that served as his instrument in conquering nature and using it in the service of man. The mood of acceptance and sanctification of all that was permanent and immutable gave way to a new belief which claimed that no problem was insoluble and no obstacle was insurmountable — all that was needed was a little effort. In the past, if a wealthy man became fatally ill, he would have donated all his money to the Church and waited to be saved by the Grace of God, knowing that man could not help him. Today, however, such a man would rather donate his money to a research foundation, in the belief that no disease is incurable if only the funds necessary for the research in finding a cure are available.

This active encounter entailed a drastic change in all the patterns of society. The rapid progress made in science and technology demanded imaginative and inventive minds, persons with a readiness to sever themselves from the past and confront the present problems, characteristics that require the encouragement and cultivation of *individuality*.

The technological progress also expressed itself in the newly developed concepts of military prowess. When weapons requiring more energy than was wielded by hand were developed, and armies began using machines that could travel, float and fly, the need for the unthinking infantry soldier decreased, and a need arose for the skilled professional soldier who was able to manipulate the modern weapons professionally. In other words, the need was no longer for the soldier who only submitted to orders, but rather for a driver of a tank, a pilot of a plane, a soldier who had to think, determine and decide his own moves within seconds, when he was all alone and his life depended upon his own decisions. Thus, even man's physical survival depended no

longer upon such traits as acceptance and self-effacement, but on the ability of men who could show initiative and apply their experience in the solving of newly arising problems.

This change, in which the culture's demands upon its members altered, reflected itself in the changing of the educational patterns. There was no longer a need for a person who mechanically collects information and knowledge, but for one who looks, judges and learns the new things, accumulates experience and knowledge to use in the solving of problems with which he is confronted. This last trait is in fact the accepted definition of the term intelligence, i.e., the ability to apply one's experience to the best advantage in solving a new problem. It is possible then to say that education had to abandon the old and accepted ideal of the "wise man" in order to encourage a new ideal — the "intelligent man."

It was the intelligent man who led the technological revolution of the industrial era, a revolution that was made possible by progress in the sciences on the one hand, and the invention and improvement of the machine on the other. The development of both these tools by the human mind in turn created far-reaching changes in man's patterns of thought. The development of physics, chemistry, mathematics and geometry demanded precise, objective and reality-oriented thinking that drew a clear-cut line between "pure" logic on the one hand, and the emotions, fantasies, wishes and drives on the other. Any contamination of thinking and judgment with the latter elements was considered as "Romantic," magic, or sentimentality. Effective thinking is that in which logic and sentimentality never intermingle, and where one does not allow his emotions to overcome his logic. And so it happened that the machine created to serve man turned into his master by demanding that he act, feel, and think like a machine. The "assembly line" modelled by Ford, which allowed merchandise to be sold cheaper and enabled the lower classes to enjoy the "luxuries," did indeed aid man; but it also made men automatons in that it made them wear the same clothes, eat the same foods, read the same books and participate in the same kinds of recreations as millions of other men.

During the pre-industrial era man's survival depended upon his physical prowess, but at present he must depend upon his ability to amass technological knowledge, i.e., industrial potential, a thriving technology and natural re-

sources. The production, accumulation and application of such power depends upon a nation's ability to educate those of talent and ability appropriately. In an industrial society the responsibility of amassing and handling the elements of power fell mainly upon the shoulders of the male, while the female's duties became the caring of the family. This fact shed its influence on the image of "man," i.e., the masculine ideal. The "man" became the one who had to be strong, courageous, logical in thought without allowing himself to be carried away by his emotions, who despised weakness and was able to bear physical suffering and mental agony, who knew his goal and strove to reach it, overcoming any obstacles that were in his way. Weakness, indulgence, sentimentality and timidity were traits allowable for women only. The increasing number of victims who succumb to the so-called psychosomatic illnesses is only one of the signs which reflect the difficulty man encountered in fulfilling this role which society assigned him. Anyone who practices psychotherapy realizes how far man is from being so strong, decisive and active, just as the woman is far from being the one who is always weak and submissive.

THE  
MODERN ERA

The developments during the past decade indicate that we are at the conclusion of one era and at the beginning of another, one not yet clear enough in its shape or design to allow us more than surmises as to what future developments will occur. We would expect that here too the changes taking place in the organization of industry, technology and the patterns of military power are those that will affect the patterns of culture, art and education.

The build up of industrial and economic power in the Western World has reached the point of saturation, where the production potential is almost infinite and is limited only by the consumers' needs. In other words, more and more of the large industries are able to produce more than the market is able to consume. The situation thus created is one where the development of the industry no longer depends on the talent of its engineers to improve the methods of production, but rather on the sales manager and his ability to sell the product. This new development has very significant effects, since the stress here shifts gradually from the engineer to the advertiser, from the technician to the psychologist, from the mechanical to the human.

As for military might, the big powers today have already accumulated maximal power sufficient to destroy their enemy within a single day. For the first time in history a situation

exists in which the nation's survival no longer depends on its potential power, but on its skill in knowing how *not to use* this power. As an industry, so it is here; the stress shifts again from the arms manufacturer and the soldier employing the arms to the skilled politicians who comprehend the mind of the enemy to know how to maintain an amount of power sufficient to threaten.

In both fields of power, military and economic, a situation is gradually developing in which the continuous survival of nations and their cultures no longer depends upon further technological advancement but rather on a thorough understanding of all that is related to the human mind, such as psychology, sociology, communications and political science.

Another important development beginning to show its effect upon our culture is the *invention of the computer*. Only in the last decade has the computer left the experimental stage to be used widely in the fields of research, industry and administration. As the invention of the machine did away with man's manual labor, so now the computer takes over part of man's work of the mind. The computer registers and stores data, matching it against previously registered information, i.e., it acquires experience and uses it to solve problems, thus accomplishing a great part of what belongs to intelligent thinking. In this lies the greatness of the computer but also its limitation; it can use its experience in the solving of new problems presented to it, but it can neither discover nor formulate these new problems. In other words, it is able to compute, but not to think. It is not capable now and probably will never be so perfected as to be able to accomplish what is particular to the human mind — creative thinking. It cannot renew ideas, uncover new problems or create new challenges to widen the scope of human knowledge. And if it was said previously that the machine enslaved the human mind by compelling it to think in patterns appropriate to its needs, today it is the computer which fulfills these technical needs. Thus, it liberated the human mind to again deal with what is particular to it, the spiritual, the emotional and particularly the creative. Civilization has finally reached the stage where it has developed a machine to serve the machines and so has liberated man to return to preoccupations with what belongs to the realm of the human mind.

Apparently, then, the tendency of progress, with its different lines of development, strives toward the same goal: the further development of economy and industry depends less on technology and more and more on man who will originate

the new ideas. The physical existence of nations no longer depends on military power but on its ability in finding ways of ensuring that the power remains unused. The computer liberates the human mind from all its mechanical elements and leaves it free to meditate and innovate new ideas. One cannot but conclude that the era of the "intelligent man" is almost over and a new one is emerging — the era of the "creative man." As we have seen from the survey of past eras, when culture makes its demands and the future of man depends upon his fulfilling those demands, a pressure arises which forces the sciences to accumulate the necessary knowledge and education to change its methods to those suitable for the formation and growth of the man who will possess the traits now needed by the culture. There is never need for planning and carrying out this change. There is not a conscious plan but rather one that grows out of the "intrinsic wisdom" of man which Erikson postulated — a sort of "unconscious planning" by culture to educate and form its future members according to the needs dictated for its survival. Not its needs of the present, but those which will arise on the day that today's youth will be the adults responsible for the perpetuation of the culture.

In the last decade we have witnessed an increasing interest in creativity in all academic disciplines. There is hardly a department of psychology or sociology throughout the Western World that does not have a team working on research into the many facets, manifestations, and uses of creative activity. Moreover, an increasing number of articles devoted to the topic of creativity have been published in journals and books. Ironically, many researchers dealing with this subject are certain that their motivation is a result of scientific curiosity only and they are unaware of at the same time fulfilling one of the vital needs of their culture, the need to collect the essential knowledge necessary for the culture's further survival.

The intensive research has already established certain meaningful facts: a person possessing a high I.Q. is not necessarily creative, and one who is creative is not necessarily endowed with high intelligence. Repeated studies of creative children demonstrated that classical education was aimed at encouraging the intelligent child and not the creative one, as though there were an unconscious plan to suppress any tendency in that direction. And indeed those talented, creative people who appeared throughout the generations did so because they were endowed with a creative



drive of such strength that it enabled them to survive the suppression, the demand for conformity and the financial obstacles placed in their way.

The study of thought processes underlying creativity also has shown that they are indeed different from those determining intelligent-logical thought. Intelligence is based on objective thinking, the ability to think abstractly, strict reality perception and the ability to isolate emotions from reason; creativity on the other hand uses subjective thinking reinforced by fantasies and imagination, is fed by emotions and is motivated by wishful thinking, representing drives and urges. Therefore, whereas intelligent thinking is fed mainly from outside, i.e., from its link to reality, creativity is fed from within, from the offsprings of emotions, wishes and desires.

Such profound changes in the patterns of thought and affect require far reaching changes in all patterns of social and individual behavior. This appears to be the meaning behind the widespread rebellion among the youth around the Western World. They seem to protest against the demand to "be logical" and to integrate into the establishment. What they are demanding is the right to lead their own lives according to their own free will. They refuse to suppress their emotions and ignore their wishes and desires, while demanding the right to give vent to their feelings and to enjoy their senses and drives (lusts). Thus, they discover anew the realm of sensual pleasure, particularly sex, which they refuse to accept as a tabooed and forbidden area. In their desire to discover the innermost depths of their souls, and in their thirst to exhaust all sensual experience, they cling to any and all means which may assist them in "descending" into themselves, even if they reach only "sick" and distorted experiences as are produced, for example, by the various drugs. In art they look for the primary, sensual, sharp experience; in painting they prefer the strong contrasting colors; in music, the primary sensual rhythms; and so on. In their way of dressing and in their appearance they stress the expression of individuality and originality, for they think that clothes should not reflect social convention or fashion but should express the individual and his uniqueness. These ways of behaving and living are marked by the same common denominator — alienation from the prevailing social order (which stresses the adjustment to social and material reality) by striving to reveal the personal, the emotional and the sensual. In other words, youth is renouncing the "reality

principle" for the sake of discovering the "self", shifting from *outer* resources to *inner* ones.

The change of values concerning the importance of the accumulation of power, which is beginning to take place in the Western World, is also reflected in the behavior and way of life of the young. Apparently, all the ideals connected with power, courage, heroism and the urge to conquer have lost all value for them. They are not willing to fight or to be heroes, nor are they willing to sacrifice themselves on the altar of an ideal; all they want is to be free to live and enjoy themselves. As a result of this change in values concerning power, there has also come a change in their attitude toward that image which has been the incarnation of the Western World's striving for power: the *image of the masculine male*. This ideal of "man" that so many generations were educated upon is rapidly losing its value. They no longer feel the need to play the role of the tough, strong, courageous, clear headed and goal oriented man, the man who constantly strove to acquire power, who was forever "climbing" either in military rank, academic achievement, political power or by merely amassing wealth. Since the ideal of the male also includes in its polarization the corresponding ideal of the female, the disappearance of the former results in the disappearance of the latter. What results is a gradual approximation of the two images approaching the middle line between them; the man becoming more and more like the woman in appearance, dress, jewelry, hair style, etc., and the woman more like the man. And, when such a couple is out strolling, it is often hard to distinguish who is the man and who is the woman.

All that has been said can obviously be no more than an outline describing the overall tendencies of the "youth protest." Since no historical development advances in a straight line, ups and downs must be expected, movements of progress which alternate with times of reaction, and times when it will seem that the whole movement of development has taken a different course.

Past experience also teaches us that every transitional period of cultural change gives rise to a variety of social movements which express changes toward different and sometimes adverse directions of development, some of them consistent with the general tendency of historical progress and some being no more than vain attempts which are doomed to failure. The same, of course, is true with regard to the many directions which the "youth protest" takes today. Only

the future will prove which of all the changes taking place today will have served historical progress and which will have proved to be useless and therefore failed.

The need for the survival and propagation of a culture forces its members to choose from among the varieties of their traits and abilities those that are best adaptable to the requirements of their time, to develop and form their personalities so that these "essential" traits become the dominant. This process taking place within the youth today may thus be understood as an attempt to change the personality patterns and inter-personal relations and give them a new direction, albeit the youth participating in this change are mostly unaware of its meaning and aim. But, in accordance with the assumption presented here, this change is inevitable as the cultural patterns making up the personality traits which were appropriate until today begin to be now non-adaptive, so that culture now demands new traits appropriate to the forthcoming era. My assumption is that the changes in youth's values and behavior are in fact the beginning of the re-formation of a new personality, one which will answer the demands of the forthcoming era.

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