

REASON AND ECSTASY: PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL NOTES ON THE EMERGING COUNTERCULTURE

by Don Browning

In the following pages, I want to show the relevance of two contemporary disciplines for addressing some of the human problems especially acute in modern times. The two disciplines I have in mind are the psychoanalytic ego psychology associated with the names of Heinz Hartman, Robert White, and Erik Erikson, and the school of process philosophy, generally linked with the name of A. N. Whitehead. These disciplines have special relevance for two of the dominant characteristics of modern societies, that is, pluralism and rapid social change. In addition, I find these resources to be helpful for evaluating some of the anthropological issues in writings of selected leading exponents of the counterculture.

Before venturing on my critique of selected issues in the literature of the counterculture, I want to discuss why I believe pluralism and rapid social change constitute the major problems of modern societies. First, let it be said that these two social phenomena are not new. In some form or other, they are as old as the human condition. It is true, however, that within the last two hundred years, with the rise of industrialization, technology, advanced urbanization, and international travel, pluralism has become more visible and the rate of

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social change more accelerated than ever before in the history of man.

Anomie and arbitrary control are the major social by-products of rapid change and pluralism. It is important to understand how both of these phenomena tend to occur simultaneously in modern societies. Many contemporary analyses of our social situation oppose these two consequences and tend to weight their diagnosis toward either anomie or arbitrary control. Some analysts believe modern societies are deficient in the kinds of social controls, cultural directives, social pathways, opportunities, and rewards that are necessary to lead people into a satisfying sense of belonging and a minimal level of conformity. Sociologists are likely to hold such a view, and names such as Émile Durkheim and Robert Merton are often associated with such a view.

Other commentators, often associated with the humanities more than with sociology, assert that modern societies exercise too much social control and are too rationalized, technologized, and bureaucratized. Spokesmen for this point of view stress the decline of freedom in modern societies. They abhor the standardization of factory and office; the preoccupation with procedures, rules, and regulations; the expansion of methods of surveillance such as police, FBI, CIA, wire tapping, and infiltration of citizens groups; and the far too frequent use of force and violence as guarantees of social order.

Both styles of analysis, of course, are right—but only half right. Only when we recognize pluralism and rapid change as the crucial social facts energizing modern life can we understand how modern man can simultaneously experience both a disconcerting sense of anomic freedom and a heightened sense of arbitrary, perhaps violent, control.

Change and pluralism tend to disrupt the patterns of expectations, norms, and values which give organic coherence to communities. Since patterns of work have much to do with forming a society's system of norms and values, technologically induced changes in occupational styles affect greatly a society's overall organization of normative expectations. Occupational specialization tends to create occupational subgroups which develop their own characteristic normative patterns, thus fostering the pluralism characteristic of advanced societies. Pluralism and change create a kaleidoscope of groups and subcommunities with conflicting behavioral and cultural patterns. At the points of interface between conflicting groups, individuals are likely to feel both anomie and arbitrary

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control, that is, a sense of loneliness or formless freedom and autocratic manipulation. Many people in modern societies are not firmly attached to any community. Hence, the normative pattern of both their communities of birth and other communities such as occupational group, corporation, or state may sometimes be experienced as external, arbitrary, manipulative, and sometimes even violent. Modern man experiences at one and the same time too much freedom and too much control and both for the same reasons. Pluralism and excessively rapid change rob him of a settled sense of community, whereby freedom is experienced as a familiar sense of decision and latitude within the boundaries of self-accepted and shared norms and values.¹

Every society has its duly appointed or self-elected priests and shamans whose task it is to counsel people in the art of handling life's transitions. The present twofold experience of anomie and arbitrary control has evoked divergent prescriptions from this corps of sanctioned and unsanctioned guides. Roughly speaking, they divide themselves into two schools of thought—the school of *ecstasy* and the school of *control*. Some, focusing exclusively on the increased sense of arbitrary control, promote responses of expressiveness, release, consciousness expansion, and boundary destruction. Other counselors, preoccupied with the heightened sense of anomie, advocate various disciplines of individual responsibility, social planning, or patterns of environmental constraint and reinforcement.

In this essay, I want to address some of the prominent spokesmen heralding the new culture of ecstasy. We are, in our time, witnessing the rise of a variety of ideologies of ecstasy, touching the practices of therapy, education, politics, and religion. At the same time, over a longer period of time, there has been developing a therapy, education, politics, and religion of control. The two movements seem to be hardening their lines of defense. In choosing to address primarily the new culture of ecstasy (frequently called the counterculture), I do not suggest that their errors are more grave than the culture of control. The culture of control is older and enjoys the privileges of established power. The culture of ecstasy has appeared (or reappeared) more recently and makes more noise. For reason of their novelty and current popularity—and not because of the special gravity of their sins—they merit the special attention of the essay.

The breadth of the new culture is remarkable. What is common to its various manifestations is a united opposition to external control (or to what is felt as external control). There has developed, in recent years, a rather well-delineated therapy, education, politics,

and theology of ecstasy. The therapy of ecstasy and its attendant psychologies has been of central importance for the entire movement and has had seminal influence on the other areas of practice. Most schools of modern psychotherapy can be construed as promoting various types of liberation from various forms and patterns of social restriction and control. Freud himself is the exception to this general trend. Freud was an elitist and political conservative; he aspired only to replace the arbitrary and unconscious restrictions of the superego with the conscious restraints of an enlightened ego informed by psychoanalytic interpretation and insight.² However, he did believe that society should "loosen its collar" a bit in the area of sexual restrictions. In spite of this, he was basically distrustful of human sexuality, and he by no means was as radical as he is often interpreted to be.

Themes of liberation and ecstasy, although modestly present in Freud, are more pronounced in Jung. Jung developed a more telling critique of Western society than did Freud; he was especially critical of its high evaluation of masculine activism, extroversion, and rationality. His therapy often served to liberate people from these typically Western patterns of control.

Wilhelm Reich, who died in an American prison for selling across interstate lines a little black box alleged to contain orgon energy, is the stellar example of a psychoanalysis of ecstasy. He is the first of the Freudian Marxists, an enemy of the patriarchal family and a celebrant of the curative powers of orgasm. He has had crucial influence on Norman Brown and Herbert Marcuse and a host of contemporary artists and writers.³

In recent times, the schools of therapy associated with the names of H. S. Sullivan, Carl Rogers, and Eric Berne can all be construed to have developed therapies of ecstasy. Sullivan helped free patients from a contradictory and confining "self-system" (Mead's internalized "generalized other"). Rogers liberated clients from internalized "conditions of worth." Berne adjusts socially embedded "patterns of interaction" or "games people play." The third and fourth forces in psychology associated with the names of Abraham Maslow, Fritz Perls, and William Schutz emphasize values of expressiveness, self-actualization, experiencing, authenticity, and openness.

These movements in therapy and psychology have provided, in one way or another, many of the insights into human nature assumed by the education, politics, and religion of ecstasy. John Leonard and Ivan Illich in education; Norman Brown, Herbert Marcuse,

and Charles Reich in political theory; and Thomas Altizer, John Cooper, and Sam Keen in religion all use, in some fashion, the resources of one or other of these therapies of ecstasy. It is for the very reason that the cultural overflow of modern psychology and psychotherapy has been so important for the culture of ecstasy that I intend to take a deeper look at some of the psychological assumptions of selected representatives of this newly emerging counter-culture.

REASON, MODERNITY, AND THE COUNTERCULTURE

I would like to restrict my remarks to the most prominent exponents of the culture of ecstasy—namely, Norman Brown, Theodore Roszak, and Charles Reich. I will not address all of their ideas, but confine myself primarily to their criticism of the role of reason in a technocratic society. Reason is generally considered to be a philosophical category. Of course, it can also be approached as a psychological category, and it is from this perspective that I primarily will be addressing it in this essay. Yet my remarks will indeed stray into the province of philosophy insofar as I will be drawing in my response to Brown, Roszak, and Reich not only from psychoanalytic ego psychology but also from the philosophical psychology of Whitehead.

Reason may indeed be the privileged category from which to address the twofold effects on human personality of rapid change and pluralism, that is, the effects of normless freedom and arbitrary control. Reason, according to Whitehead, is the faculty which achieves adaptive order for man by criticizing and selecting the novel possibilities which the transitions of experience present.⁴ To say that rapid change and pluralism are the hallmarks of modernity is to suggest that modern societies are being overwhelmed by the anarchy of unassimilated and uncriticized novelty. If this is the case, it may be that the difficulties with modern societies has to do with the breakdown of reason as that faculty which orders and renews life through the criticism and selection of novel possibilities.

Brown, Roszak, and Reich share many ideas in common. They all believe that contemporary technocratic society is basically inhuman. They also believe that the kind of human energies and mental processes which go into the support of this kind of society are dehumanizing and repressive. These men contend that Western technocratic society is sustained by certain mental processes which they variously refer to as "mind" (Brown), "intellective" or "objective consciousness" (Roszak), "linear and analytic thought" or "reason"

(Reich). Each of these writers is calling for a new organization of human energies which will somehow go beyond intellection, objective consciousness, or reason. In urging Western man to go beyond reason, they point to the possibility of a society organized around what are variously referred to as nonintellective powers, feelings, spontaneity, or shamanistic ecstasy.

In reviewing the writings of these men, one quickly learns that their attack on the rationalizing processes underpinning technocratic societies is really only an attack on that narrower form of reason which Paul Tillich often referred to as "technical" or "controlling" reason.⁵ Their critical remarks do not address that fuller and more human kind of reason which Tillich referred to as an "ontological reason," that is, the classical understanding which saw reason as effective in man's cognitive, aesthetic, emotional, and practical activity, enabling the mind to grasp the essential structures of reality.⁶ It is a shortcoming of their polemic against reason that they focus entirely on technical reason and disregard completely this more classical understanding.

These three men vary considerably in terms of the radicality of their attack on reason and the extremity of their call for an ecstatic response. Brown is by far the most radical, Reich the least, with Roszak running back and forth between them in a considerable state of ambivalence. On the one hand, Brown believes that the totality of modern technological life and the forms of rationality which support it are utter disease, repression, and death—mind "at the end of its tether."⁷ Considerably more conservative than Brown is Reich who believes that the modern technocratic society, as sick as it is, is simply assumed by the youth culture of today (Consciousness III) and thereby constitutes the presupposition of the more spontaneous style of life that it is evolving.⁸ Between them is Roszak, who for the most part sides with the uncompromising position of his hero, Brown, but who in the last pages of his book, *The Making of a Counter Culture*, seems to opt for some kind of compromise with the technocratic society. Actually, all of these men seem to be searching for a way to orient Western life around something other than technical reason but seem unable to articulate this short of a totalistic denunciation of reason in its entirety.

Brown builds his case on explicitly psychological grounds. His *Life against Death* is a radically romantic interpretation of Freudian psychoanalysis. The book is an exceedingly complicated exposition and reinterpretation of some of Freud's major ideas. Although he systematically rebuilds many of Freud's major concepts, in other in-

stances he simply takes certain key notions of the master to their logical conclusion in a way which, as Brown himself points out, Freud was unwilling to do.

Brown believes, as did Freud, that man's most primitive wish is for the bliss of everlasting union with the mother. Yet Brown cleanses Freud's depiction of this wish. Freud described it as an acquisitive and sadistic desire to possess the mother; Brown describes it as an existential project of being-one-with-the-world.⁹ Man's trouble—his fall into neurosis, disease, and history—is due to man's inability to face the threat of separation from sensual union with the world in the form of mother. In contrast to Freud, who believed that the desire for union with the mother is repressed by the threat of castration from the father, Brown believes that man is precisely the creature who spontaneously represses himself.¹⁰ The simple possibility of separation from the mother causes man to both repress his desire for union and repress his fear of separation (his fear of death).

Brown believes that man is the animal whose fear of death makes him repress his own bodily life, that is, repress his own desire for sensuous and immediate union with the world. Following Freud's 1911 essay entitled "Formulations regarding the Two Principles in Mental Functioning,"¹¹ Brown hypothesizes that when the infant cannot have direct contact with objects of sexual desire, these objects are then hallucinated and a secondary, substitute object is set up within the mental apparatus. This is how the processes of thinking arise; thinking (the secondary processes of the ego) arises as a hallucinated gratification which substitutes the imaginary object for direct union with objects of love in the world. This is the process of sublimation, and sublimation is always a process of desexualization; the new object internalized and installed within the self is a desexualized object, devoid of the erotic character of our former direct relationship to the world (the mother).

The process whereby man desexualizes the world and internalizes it into the self gives man a "soul," a fantasied, dreamlike world of substitute gratification. This, according to Brown, is the origin of the Greek mind-body dualism, the beginning of philosophy and science, and the foundation of all cognitive thought and reason. Brown writes, "The starting point for the human form of cognitive activity is the loss of a loved reality."¹² All thought as well as all symbols are finally efforts to recapture the fullness of the repressed body in erotic union with the world. All reason, all cognitive activity, as well as the entirety of man's cultural activity are really a frantic effort to

recapture the “sacred” body which man lost through repression. *Home symbolicum* is, for Brown, *homo sublimans*.¹³

Few people who are influenced by Brown bother to worry themselves about the specific structure of his thought. Brown presents himself as something of a poet writing in aphorisms, puns, and symbols.¹⁴ Yet his counsel to obliterate the boundaries which distinguish the ego from the world and to unite with the world in Dionysian ecstasy is taken quite seriously (if not quite literally) by many of the young and many of the so-called prophets of the counterculture. Roszak is one of these prophets. In his chapter on the contributions of Marcuse and Brown to the emerging counterculture, Roszak writes, with obvious appreciation for Brown, that in the realm of “social criticism, the counter culture begins where Marcuse pulls up short, and where Brown, with no apologies, goes off the deep end.”¹⁵

Certainly Roszak does not go all the way with Brown. His attack on reason is in no way buttressed by appeals to Freudian metapsychology in the fashion of Brown or Marcuse.¹⁶ Yet he goes far enough with Brown to make his reluctance to go all the way somewhat confusing.

Rozzak’s volleys are aimed at the technocratic society and the processes of rationalization which it uses to support itself. Following very much the line of thought found in Max Weber and Jacques Ellul, Roszak defines technocratic society as that society which uses “technique” (rationalized planning) and the devices of the “expert” as the preferred method for ordering the various realms of social reality.¹⁷ Such procedures tend to introduce into society a variety of evils—a type of human consciousness alienated from direct experience, a hierarchical social order, and a “mechanistic imperative” whereby both inner and outer reality are handled like machines.¹⁸

In contrast to these trends, Roszak champions currents in our society—namely, psychoanalysis, the drug culture, and various Eastern religions—which are giving emphasis to inner psychological realities. In one place, he writes

One can discern, then, a continuum of thought and experience among the young which links together the New Left sociology of Mills, the Freudian Marxism of Herbert Marcuse, the Gestalt-therapy anarchism of Paul Goodman, the apocalyptic body mysticism of Norman Brown, the Zen-based psychotherapy of Alan Watts, and finally Timothy Leary’s impenetrably occult narcissism. . . . As we move along the continuum, we find sociology giving way steadily to psychology, political collectivities yielding to the person, conscious and articulate behavior falling away before the forces of the nonintellective deep.¹⁹

These cultural movements have offered our society a vocabulary for expressing the "nonintellective" side of man.²⁰ And this, it appears, is Roszak's solution to the overemphasis upon technique typical of the technocratic society. At one point, he echoes the spirit of Brown while using the words of Laing when he calls for "the dissolution of the normal ego" and the "emergence of the 'inner' archetypal mediators of divine power."²¹ The counterculture's attack on "reason" and "reality" as our society defines them is an attack on the validity of the "I" and an assault on the reality of the "ego as isolable, purely cerebral unit of identity."²²

Roszak never really defines what he means by "nonintellective" capacities. Toward the end of his book, he only seems to be making the point that intellective forces are always subservient to and at the service of some kind of more encompassing social or cultural vision. This seems to be a rather mild contention which hardly necessitates his rather diffuse attack on reason (in all of its forms) and his enthusiastic celebration of the boundary-shattering, ego-obliterating forces of the "nonintellective deep."

Reich is certainly the most cautious of the three. His focus is more directly on the youth culture itself rather than a metapsychological revision of Freud (Brown) or a chronicle of the cultural sources of the so-called counterculture (Roszak). Consciousness III is his way of referring to the new kind of sensibilities he believes to be emerging in the elite sectors of the youth culture. It will replace, he contends, the remnants of Consciousness I and our more recent experience with Consciousness II. Consciousness I was that strange combination of the Protestant ethic and social Darwinism which dominated the sensibilities of our pioneer forefathers who built this nation. Consciousness II is the mentality of meritocracy which accompanied the supremacy of the corporate state in our own more recent past. Consciousness III is surpassing these former phases and exhibits a new capacity for liberation from the strictures of meritocracy, a new personalism, a new interest in community participation, a new openness, and a new expressiveness revealed in dress, music, and the use of consciousness-expanding drugs.²³

A distinctive mark of Consciousness III is its skepticism of "both linear and analytic thought."²⁴ Reich believes that Consciousness III is trying to "escape . . . so-called rational thought"; it is "deeply suspicious of logic, rationality, and of principles."²⁵ It believes that "reason tends to leave out too many factors and values—especially those which cannot readily be put into words and categories."²⁶

In spite of this skepticism of technical reason, the Consciousness III generation knows how to use the products of technology. It seems that these young people were born with technology and simply assume it.²⁷ Yet, Consciousness III does not want to live with the kind of rationality which gives birth to the abundance which it assumes. It believes that "thought can be 'nonlinear,' spontaneous, disconnected."²⁸ Consciousness III wants to break the bonds of the rational ego in an effort to heighten its awareness of the outside world, and it will do this, of course, with whatever artificial aids, chemical or otherwise, which it seems appropriate to use.

A MISDIRECTED ATTACK

The counterculture's attack against reason strikes one as something like using a fleet of World War II bombers to rout out a menacing but solitary murderer. The problem it is addressing is indeed a serious one, but the attack is so broadly conceived that it is destined to kill off a large group of innocent bystanders. A polemic against technical reason would be more convincing if it were limited to just *this* instead of assuming the proportions of a full-scale offensive against reason in its entirety. For the most part, I believe these three authors are attempting to state the ways in which man has access to deeper sources of wisdom, self-regulation, and self-renewal than can be tapped with simply the instrumental processes of technical reason. These deeper forces, I believe, should also be properly termed as rational. It is their failure to understand this point that makes reading these three authors such a superficial experience.

We could turn to several sources for a fuller discussion of the nature of reason. Newer trends in psychoanalysis, the theology of Tillich, and the philosophy of Whitehead are just three of many possible sources. For purposes that should become obvious as I proceed, I have chosen to center primarily on the later developments of psychoanalysis and a few of Whitehead's ideas about the nature of reason.

Psychoanalysis has been an important source for the ideology of the counterculture. As we have seen, especially is this true for Brown—one of the counterculture's founding fathers and guiding lights. Recent developments in a certain body of psychoanalytic theory, generally referred to as psychoanalytic ego psychology, have developed a new vision of the relationship between the rational and the irrational processes in man. These trends in psychoanalytic theory exert considerable strain on Brown's use of psychoanalysis. Brown

would object to these new developments and has, indeed, officially rejected them. Yet certain aspects of his own thought make it difficult for him to do this.

Freud himself had a healthy respect for reason, yet he tended to reduce human rationality to what I have called technical reason. Reason for Freud was primarily the practical maneuvers of the ego to avoid pain and to maximize pleasure.²⁹ The ego, for Freud, was primarily subservient to the energies and dynamics of the id and had no autonomy of its own. It lived, according to Freud, off energies borrowed from the id and succeeded in controlling the id only because of its superior organization and its closer affiliation with the perceptual powers of the organism.³⁰ On the other hand, Freud had a genuine distrust of the id, believed that it was atemporal and alogical and saw it as basically devoid of organizational and regulatory capacities. This left Freud with a fundamental contradiction. On the one hand, he trusted the ego over the id, but, on the other hand, he was unable to explain adequately how the ego—always conceived as a subservient and secondary process to the id—actually gained its organizational and regulatory powers.

Brown, fully aware of the fact that in Freud the ego is always conceived of as a secondary process and a product of sublimation, carried psychoanalysis to its logical conclusion and equated the ego (the seat of man's rational powers) with neurosis and disease. In doing this, Brown has chosen to disregard the ways in which the most authoritative and respected quarters of psychoanalysis have reformulated Freud on the very question of the nature of the ego and the relationship of the rational and irrational in man. This reformulation can be found in the writings of the late Heinz Hartmann, widely recognized as the leading theoretician of psychoanalysis after Freud himself. In his outstanding 1937 monograph entitled *Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation*,³¹ Hartmann introduces two ideas, among others, that are important for our discussion.

First, he argues that the ego must be thought of as in certain ways independent from the id. By this he means that the processes of perception, thinking, memory, and motility—generally recognized in psychoanalytic theory as processes of the ego—must be understood as basic capacities of the human organism and not the result of sublimation, repression, and instinctual frustration. They are indeed subject to the laws of development and maturation, but they are not secondary processes derived from the conflict between instinctual impulse and the frustrations of reality. Rather than being the result

of instinctual repression (as Brown would insist), they are the very presupposition for the possibility of repression. Only when one posits the ego's autonomous capacity to perceive danger and inhibit instinctual impulse is it possible to understand how repression comes about. Rather than being the result of repression, the ego's autonomous powers to perceive, think, remember, and control motility are the very grounds upon which repression of instinctual impulse is possible. In an article penned in 1956, Hartmann wrote that,

The postponement or control of discharge is one of the essential features of the human ego from its beginnings. . . . We should consider what is, I think, a necessary assumption that the child is born with a certain degree of preadaptiveness; that is to say, the apparatus of perception, memory, motility, etc., which help us to deal with reality are, in a primitive form, already present at birth; later they will mature and develop in constant interaction, of course, with experience.³²

The "postponement or control of discharge," of course, is another way of talking about repression. In terms of our discussion with Brown, the point of Hartmann's remarks are clear: the ego—the center of human rationality and the key to man's regulation of himself and his environment—is the presupposition of repression and not the result of repression. From the standpoint of more recent psychoanalytic theory, it is absurd to assert, as does Brown, that reason in man is the result of repression and the equivalent of neurosis and disease. Reason may indeed be the seat of many of man's difficulties, but that it is in its entirety the very essence of sickness is patently ridiculous to assert on the grounds of psychoanalytic theory.³³

Hartmann's second important contribution is his revision of the psychoanalytic theory of the relation between the ego and the id, that is, between the rational and irrational in man. In his 1937 monograph and in a later article entitled "The Concept of Health," Hartmann identifies the problem of mental health as being a question of the appropriate relationship between the rational and irrational.³⁴ Hartmann approaches this problem by challenging Freud's understanding of the id as regulated solely by the atemporal and alogical processes of the pleasure principle. Instead, Hartmann believes that the distinction between the ego and the id is primarily one of degree. Hartmann contends that there is a hierarchical relationship between the ego and the id and that the ego simply organizes and directs lower-order regulatory capacities of the id.³⁵ Creative adaptation is always a matter of keeping higher processes of regulation (the ego) in fruitful interaction with lower processes of regu-

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lation (the id). Neither ego nor id, by itself, is sufficient for successful living. In Hartmann's view of man, the entire human organism is basically rational in the sense of contributing to the delicate processes of creative adaptation. Higher-order processes of thinking, abstraction, generalization, etc., require the regulatory capacities of lower-order processes of the id if they are to be truly serviceable for good living. Because of the importance of lower-order processes for the successful functioning of higher-order processes, Hartmann sees an important adaptive function of certain types of regressive fantasy activity. He, along with Ernest Kris, calls this "regression in service of the ego" and believes that it is essential for the healthy functioning of the higher processes of reason.³⁶ He writes,

The function of the most highly differentiated organ of reality adaption cannot alone guarantee an optimal total adaptation of the organism. . . . There is, for example, the detour through fantasy. Though fantasy is always rooted in the past, it can, by connecting past and future, become the basis for realistic goals. There are the symbolic images familiar in productive scientific thinking; and there are poetry and all the other forms of artistic activity and experience.³⁷

It is clear that Hartmann has restored the concept of reason to psychoanalytic theory. He has done this in a way to correct the inadequacies of Freud and to undercut the unfortunate excesses to which people like Brown have taken psychoanalytic theory. The direction begun by Hartmann has been amplified and consolidated in the works of White and Erikson. It is now a solid foundation for the most normative aspects of present-day psychoanalytic theory. In the hands of men such as Hartmann, White, and Erikson, psychoanalysis does, indeed, constitute a powerful critique of technical reason. But far from simply destroying reason, the cultural impact of psychoanalysis has now become to restore to man a vision of the fullness of reason—both the higher reaches of perception, thinking, abstraction, and generalization as well as the lower processes of regulation with which the higher processes so desperately need to be informed.

A NEW DIRECTION

This more balanced view of reason is relevant to the thought of Roszak and Reich. Although Roszak is the only one of the two directly influenced by psychoanalysis, both are striving to state resources for living beyond the narrow confines of technical reason. The limitation of their thought is their tendency to characterize

these larger resources as “nonintellective” and fundamentally opposite to the nature and function of reason in human life. Recent psychoanalytic theory provides us with a new vocabulary and a new model of man which helps us conceptualize the way in which these so-called nonintellective and irrational processes are really a fundamental part of the very fullness of reason itself.

These recent developments in psychoanalytic theory tend to correspond with the earlier efforts in process philosophy to state the function of reason in the terms of evolutionary theory. Whitehead once wrote that the “function of Reason is to promote the art of life.”³⁸ Reason, according to Whitehead directs the “three-fold urge (1) to live, (2) to live well, (3) and to live better.”³⁹ The importance of this way of talking about the meaning of reason is this: it places the discussion of the nature of reason in the context of man’s general evolutionary struggle to adapt to his environment (to live) and to do so with a flourish (to live well and to live better).

Whitehead advances his discussion of reason by making a distinction between practical reason (the reason of Ulysses) and theoretical reason (the reason of Plato). The function of practical reason is to criticize novel ideas and to help bring those which are relevant to adaptation into concrete realization.⁴⁰ On the face of things, theoretical reason appears to have no practical function whatsoever. Theoretical reason “seeks with disinterested curiosity an understanding of the world.”⁴¹ But, from another perspective, theoretical reason is extremely relevant to the general evolutionary struggle to live well and better. The higher processes of theoretical reason—disinterested and self-motivated as these are—provided man with a fund of abstract ideas which, in certain situations of crisis, help man to break out of old and exhausted methodologies of adaptation and develop a new evolutionary “dodge” which renews and thereby saves the race.⁴² From this point of view, nothing has more evolutionary relevance than the playful and disinterested processes of theoretical reason.

The totality of Whitehead’s philosophy of evolution can be read as a devastating attack on the dominant methodology of adaptation in Western societies, that is, the methodologies associated with technical reason. From this standpoint, technical reason should be understood as a special manifestation in our historical era of the larger processes of practical reason. Technical reason, Whitehead would contend, is a debased and exhausted form of practical reason. However, practical reason, he believed, needs the playful speculations of theoretical reason to save it from its own inevitable exhaustion.

The view of reason found in psychoanalytic ego psychology articulates well with the vision of reason to be found in Whitehead's philosophy of emergent evolution. Whitehead's concept of practical reason performs many of the same functions assigned to the ego in Hartmann's revision of psychoanalytic theory; both criticize the novel possibilities of experience from the standpoint of their relevance for the adaptive struggle of the entire human organism. In addition, psychoanalytic ego psychology, especially in the work of White, has recently been giving attention to those higher functions of the ego referred to as thought, abstraction, and generalization. These processes, it is now acknowledged, appear to be self-motivated, intrinsically enjoyable, and empowered by energies independent of the tension-reduction patterns of the id.⁴³ On the other hand, these processes, which first become visible in the seemingly purposeless activities of childhood play, help organize for the human organism a fund of basic concepts about the world which can be called upon to provide adaptive responses in moments of crisis. Both psychoanalysis and process philosophy are developing an evolutionary understanding of reason, and both of these schools of thought see reason as involving processes which are both higher and lower than the narrow instrumental procedures of technical reason.

There are better and more persuasive assessments of the inadequacies of technical reason than can be found in the literature of the counterculture. I believe that psychoanalytic ego psychology and process philosophy are two important sources. They both have the virtue of taking into account the major center of modern thought—evolutionary theory. An evolutionary theory of reason is better able to articulate the function of reason in relation to the transitions, novelties, and diversities of experience. The major shortcoming of technical reason, I would contend, is its tendency to accelerate the introduction of novel possibilities into experience. The enormous inventive power of technical reason has created a veritable avalanche of technologically produced social change, novelty, and plurality. This has tended to fragment our social existence, diffuse the identity of adolescent and adult alike, and unleash the twofold processes of anomie (normless freedom) and arbitrary control. An evolutionary theory of reason helps us to understand how it is the proper function of reason to criticize change and novelty. It also helps us to understand that it is precisely this task which technical reason has abdicated in modern times. Technical reason, in its failure to bring criticism and guidance to the novel possibilities of technocratic society, has turned change and novelty into anarchy.

Change and novelty, uncriticized, become anarchy, and anarchy turns freedom into anomie and order into arbitrary control. The answer to the anarchy of technical reason is not the formless ecstasy of the counterculture. The answer is to return to the fullness of reason, both its depths and its heights, so that life can be renewed by the discovery of truly serviceable novel possibilities duly criticized and evaluated in light of the total needs of man.

I do not mean to say, however, that reason and ecstasy are incompatible with one another. Reason, in its highest reaches, is precisely ecstasy submitted to the discipline of method and order. The failure of the counterculture to understand this relationship between reason and ecstasy goes to the essence of its misdirected attack against reason. Whitehead's remark on the relationship between speculative reason and religious intuition are relevant to this point. He writes,

The passionate demand for freedom of thought is a tribute to the deep connection of the speculative Reason with religious intuitions. The Stoics emphasized this right of the religious spirit to face the infinitude of things, with such understanding as it might. In the first period when the speculative Reason emerged as a distinguishable force, it appeared in the guise of sporadic inspirations. Seers, prophets, men with a new secret, appeared. They brought to the world fire, or salvation, or release, or moral insight. Their common character was to be bearers of some imaginative novelty, relevant and yet transcending traditional ways.

The real importance of the Greeks for the progress of the world is that they discovered the almost incredible secret that the speculative Reason was itself subject to orderly method. They robbed it of its anarchic character without destroying its function of reaching beyond set bounds. That is why we now speak of the speculative Reason in the place of Inspiration. Reason appeals to the orderliness of what is reasonable while "speculation" expresses the transcendence of any particular method. The Greek secret is, how to be bounded by method even in its transcendence.⁴⁴

It is my personal feeling that in our time the inspiration of ecstasy and the order of reason must come together in the "imaginative" meditation upon that body of facts which has given rise to evolutionary theory. This is the project which Whitehead, Hartshorne, and the school of process philosophy set for themselves. It is still our best single hope for a viable identity for modern man. Our various individual identities, our many historical traditions, and our separate religious symbols and commitments must find a new intelligibility in light of that one urge to live, live well, and live better. Sidney Mead expresses my point precisely when he writes,

I am trying to suggest that the "modern" can find a stable identity only in

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the context of unimaginable time, as he senses a mystical unity with all of life on its "immense journey." This is the passionate imaginative recognition of unbroken continuity in the physical universe, and in all of life in its manifold forms and monstrous shapes—the staggering awareness that we *are* life, life at last become aware of itself and henceforth burdened with the awful responsibility for its destiny in the universe.⁴⁵

A religious vision disciplined by the facts of evolution, but inspired by our own sense of continuity with its mysterious processes, will be the place where reason and ecstasy meet in our time.

NOTES

1. My analysis in the above paragraphs is informed by many sources, but is basically my own. The nearest single source which comes close to my twofold emphasis on both normless freedom and arbitrary control as characteristic of modern societies is Thomas Luckman's *Invisible Religion* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1967), p. 10.
2. For an enlightened discussion of Freud's essential conservative approach to therapy and politics, see Philip Rieff's stimulating *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).
3. For intelligent discussion of Reich's thought, see *ibid.*, chap. 6, pp. 141-88, and Paul Robinson, *The Freudian Left* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 9-74.
4. A. N. Whitehead, *The Function of Reason* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), pp. 20-34.
5. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 1:73.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
7. Norman Brown, "Apocalypse: The Place of Mystery in the Life of the Mind," *Harper's Magazine* (May 1961), p. 47.
8. Charles Reich, *The Greening of America* (New York: Bantam Books, 1971), p. 236.
9. Norman Brown, *Life against Death* (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), p. 43.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
11. The most available source of this essay is *General Psychological Theory*, ed. Philip Rieff (New York: Collier Books, 1953), pp. 21-28.
12. Brown, *Life against Death*, p. 163.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 169.
14. Brown's aphoristic style appeared in his *Love's Body* (New York: Random House, 1966). It has continued in the few articles he has written since that time. See "Daphne, or Metamorphosis," in *Myths, Dreams, and Religion*, ed. Joseph Campbell (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1970), pp. 100-20, and especially his "From Politics to Metapolitics," *Caterpillar* 1 (October 1967): 69.
15. Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter-Culture* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1969), p. 88.
16. See Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962).
17. Roszak, pp. 5-7.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 218-28.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

23. Reich, pp. 233-85.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 241.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 278.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.*, p. 236.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 278.
29. Illuminating discussions of Freud's understanding of reason can be found in the works of Philip Rieff. In one place Rieff writes, "To Freud, reason is without content, a technical instrument. Psychoanalytic therapy proposes no substantive program to the ego. . . . Indeed, . . . reason is a mediating aptitude and not an inclusive end" (*Freud: The Mind of a Moralizer* [New York: Doubleday & Co., 1961], p. 105). See also his "Freudian Ethics and the Idea of Reason," *Ethics* 67 (1957): 172-74.
30. For a summary of Freud's later theory of the ego, see his *The Ego and the Id* (London: Hogarth Press, 1957).
31. Heinz Hartmann, *Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation* (New York: International Universities Press, 1958).
32. Heinz Hartmann, "Notes on the Reality Principle," in *Essays on Ego Psychology* (New York: International Universities Press, 1964), pp. 245-46.
33. A point of clarification about Hartmann's theory of the ego is in order. Hartmann did introduce the idea that the human ego does have "structural" independence from the id. But he failed to take this as far as he should have. He still believed that the energy of the ego did come from the id. Hartmann invoked Freud's idea of "neutralized" or "desexualized" energies to explain this. The inadequacy of this cumbersome set of concepts has been brilliantly explored by Robert White in his *Ego and Reality in Psychoanalytic Theory* (New York: International Universities Press, 1963). Regardless of this shortcoming, Hartmann still made an enormous contribution toward a revised psychoanalytic theory of the ego.
34. Hartmann, *Ego Psychology* (n. 31 above), p. 36; see also his "The Concept of Health," in *Essays* (n. 32 above), p. 9.
35. Hartmann, *Ego Psychology*, p. 36.
36. Ernst Kris, *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (New York: International Universities Press, 1952).
37. Hartmann, *Ego Psychology*, p. 36.
38. Whitehead (n. 4 above), p. 4.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
43. White (n. 33 above), pp. 175-80.
44. Whitehead, pp. 66-67.
45. Sidney Mead, "History and Identity," *Journal of Religion* 51, no. 1 (1971): 13.