"THE cause of anything is everything," some anonymous sage once said. This interesting proposition embodies, among other things, the notion of the interrelatedness of all things—an extension of the concept of the ecological web into a universal statement. Today the search goes on for causes of the cultural transformation the society is undergoing, for reasons for the youth-powered revolt that is shaking every aspect of American life. The causes no doubt are varied and interrelated, but among the more fundamental is this: Today the image of man held by Western society is undergoing a profound revision; what is known as the youth revolt is the conflict between those who have adopted the emerging new image and those who cling to the old.

The term "Image of Man" needs explanation. It has been used by Maurice Friedman to describe man's collective picture of himself. It is akin to Charles Reich's celebrated "consciousness," though it refers rather more specifically to man's consciousness of self. It alludes to what any cultural group believes to be generally true about man himself, what about man is valued. Over the centuries each age has produced its characteristic image: Tribal Man, Hellenistic Man, Medieval Man, Renaissance Man.

The image that has dominated the outlook of the Western world for over a century now has been Scientific/Rational Man. In this image, man's intellectual capacities are most valued. The goal of Scientific/Rational Man is to achieve control over the physical world, a goal that requires an accurate description of reality, a goal that is achieved by coupling reason with the methodology of science. Such a coupling requires effective suppression, or at least control, of man's subjective functioning. In effect, this view considers the essence of reality as existing apart from man. Consequently, all of those human functions that interfere with reasoning—emotions and spirituality, for example—must be kept under close stricture.

A New Image of Man

Today a new image of man is emerging, one strongly at variance with Scientific/Rational Man on virtually every count, one that is based on a revised conception of the nature of reality and of man. This new view includes man himself as a part of any description of reality. It restores all of man's

*Wesley Miller, Assistant Professor of Education, Queens College, Flushing, New York
functions to a place of importance—the functions of emotions, spirituality, bodily processes, interpersonal relations, manual skills, intuitive thought, and so forth. No longer, in the new view, is intellection the highest function.

The emerging image of man is said to be humanistic because it concentrates directly on human welfare; that is, it values human beings above all else—above ideologies, above abstract values, above political systems, above material things. Further, and importantly, it is a personalist humanism, for it emphasizes the individual person more than it does social institutions and political entities.

**Principles of the New Image of Man**

The new image of man is founded on principles that arise as the outcome of a revised view as to the nature of reality, principles that depart from those underlying the scientific/rational view:

1. **Man's knowledge of reality is personal; it is created by each person as a result of the synthesis of his unique being, his total experience, and the external world.** This is the key concept of the emerging image of man, for it implies that wholly objective knowledge—a keystone of the scientific/rational view—is impossible to attain. It does not imply that there is no external reality, but it does hold that each man's knowledge of it is always in some measure personal; that one's personal self is as much a part of reality as the external world. Further, it maintains that nonintellective experiences can be valid sources of knowledge: dreams, transcendental states, spiritual experiences, ESP, meditation, and revelation, to name a few.

2. **Humans have a vast potential for fuller functioning, for experiencing life, for knowing and performing.** By valuing and developing all of their capacities—feelings, thought, sensory awareness, motor skills, interpersonal relations, aesthetic responses, moods, impulses, biological functions—people can greatly expand the quality of their experience. This is in contrast to Scientific/Rational Man who attempts to develop intellectual capacities above all others.

3. **Humans experience, learn, and communicate by a variety of means other than language; language itself is inadequate for the complete expression of either experience or knowledge.**

   This principle recognizes the ineffable nature of much of human experience, it acknowledges the vast amount of learning which is experienced other than through words, and it stresses the importance of nonverbal forms of communication such as gestures. Further, this principle states that much of what humans experience cannot be expressed or, as Michael Polanyi has put it, "We know more than we can tell." This principle departs from the scientific/rational view in which verbal knowledge is virtually synonymous with knowledge itself.

**Sources of the New Image of Man**

Though the principles underlying the new image of man are many, the major origins are as follows:

1. **Science.** The development of non-Euclidean geometry and non-Newtonian physics, the establishment of Heisenberg's Principle of Indeterminacy, and the apparently never-ending expansion of what is not known as a byproduct of the expansion of what is known have caused scientists to recognize that man's knowledge of the universe is incomplete and always in some measure subjective. This represents a modification of the earlier premise that man could come to a complete, objective picture of the universe.

2. **Existentialism.** The view of human life supported by existentialist thought holds that intellectual, verbal means of coming to knowledge are inadequate; existentialists stress the primacy of human existence.

3. **Humanistic psychology.** Underlying humanistic psychology is the view that man has a vast, untapped potential for expanding his abilities.

---

4. Existential psychiatrists. A small but influential group of psychiatrists (R. D. Laing, Thomas Szasz, and others) are rejecting the scientist/rationalist base upon which conventional psychiatry rests and are supporting a view that grants validity to the individual person and honors his experience of the world.

5. General semantics. The limited ability of language to communicate, its pervasive influence on how humans view the world, its role in determining how men think and act, and its imperfections in mirroring reality have all been amplified by the findings of general semanticists.

6. Zen Buddhism and Eastern thought. The importance of nonverbal ways of experiencing the world, of coming to knowledge, and of making decisions has been given emphasis by Zen Buddhists and their followers.

Few ideas underlying the new image of man are new; what is new is that there now has come into being a significant population whose values and life style seem to embody its principles. For the most part, these living examples of the new image are found among the young; but this is by no means universally true, inasmuch as the lifestyle appropriate to the new image is the product of consciousness rather than of chronological age. Nevertheless, to the young the new life style is thoroughly natural, and its assimilation requires for them no relearning as it does for older folk.

Margaret Mead, in her study of the generation gap, states, "The past for them (the young) is colossal, unintelligible failure and the future may hold nothing but the destruction of the planet." As a result, she states, "They are like the first generation born into a new country." The personal, humanistic nature of their view of life is epitomized by the phrase, "Do your own thing," which, however much it may be abused, is at heart a plea for each person to have the freedom to experience the world as he sees fit and to define fulfillment on his own terms. As a consequence, the youth culture places heavy emphasis on full engagement with life itself free from ideological and social restraints and without the burden of intellectual analysis.

Many lists have been compiled contrasting the old consciousness and the new. The listing in Figure 1 may be representative.

Why protest and conflict? Consider the situation.

There exist today two groups, each seeing the world through different eyes—one cool, detached, rational; the other passionate, involved, visceral. One group, older and larger, controls the social institutions that govern men's lives; the other group, deeply committed to a more humane world, sees these institutions as destructive of human fulfillment. Given the circumstances, could there be anything but protest and conflict?