by Barry Kaplan
The New York Times

We are dying here.

This is the way, now, to say that if we were elsewhere, we would not be dying there, but that the stresses of the world—of mind and body—are, to one degree or another, setting up lethal situations at a far greater rate than the stress of the post-war baby boom have any preparation, or, it would seem, inclination to do so. It has been long observed by some of us here to suffer its consequences, but we are dying faster than we were to the consequences.

Since it is basic to our hallowed tradition of common law to afflict guilt upon someone, let us proceed to examine the evidence and return a verdict as quickly and painlessly as possible.

As Students

Let those of us who are students—faced with five papers, three lab write-ups, and a mass of various assignments (all due on the same day), all vitally essential to our continued survival—be sure we have not voluntarily entered—lash out blindly in all directions, since it is we who are on the bottom of the heap.

Let us attack violently the faculty who have the notion that the course they teach is the most important course in the entire world, paralyzing the demands that might later follow, such as raising and providing for a family, serving the society in one way or another, and whatever else people do when they magically flee the ivy womb.

Let us scream defiance at the parents who raised and provided for us, at the society that asks us to render our service in blood, at whatever other institution that may at some time or another have suggested that we be here to earn our degree and keep our adolescence for the additional time necessary for the market to provide a niche for us.

Let us scream and rage and attack with all brutality and vigor the systems that threaten our security.

As Teachers

Let those of us who are members of the teaching staff—concerned by the department, the administration, the papers to grade, the publications necessary to the tenure of whatever division we have had of continuing as scholars and teachers—lash out blindly in all directions, and it is we who must fight this system to the students and administration, apologizing on both sides for the sorry mess everything is in.

Let us lash out at all those who, on the outside, threaten our cherished freedom to say and do what we please, and at those on the inside who dare to suggest that the invisible work we have here to do with all our lives might be superseded by the new knowledge that they have found, by methods always suspect.

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As Administrators

And we administrators, answerable to the money that sustains the dream in which we all live, and to the faculty that seems unable to understand the delicate problems of keeping all the people happy all the time; disciplinarians to students every year less manageable and more irrational; apologists to the columnists who find waste and weasel-wording and way-out philosophies threatening the happiness of the audiences they sell newspapers to . . . let us lash out blindly in all directions.

Let us scream and rage and attack with all brutality and vigor the systems that threaten our security.

As Students

The battle cry is up and the war rages in full swing on the planet most of us are doomed to finish our days upon. But one party innocent in this struggle overlook a paradox—a flaw in the structure of the war we wage against the threats to our security.

We are so busy maintaining our position in this new, never-ending power struggle back of the person ahead of us, that we complain that there is no time to analyze the effects of this fight will kill us all before our time. And how can we make "improvements" if there is no time to improve the system, if there is no room for improvement, in other fields as well?

Someone has been able to analyze the mechanical system well enough to soften its impact upon the human being. Perhaps the same can be done within the less tangible human system that gives rise to the violence necessary to sustain the academic system. Why?

Once we slow down the least bit, the questions flood in:

Why aren't we able to assimilate all the shocks that, instead, inspire the blind defensive mechanisms?

Why do we permit the stress to play us like fiddles—losing our minds, our lives, our places on the circuit?

What on earth prevents the university from making the first step toward the lowered tension that would permit the majority of its closely selected students to perform the operations that would permit the fulfillment of their aspirations, instead of seeking paths of least resistance: dropping out, turning to escape their majesty, their conscious-ness, their lives?

Why are the Humanities not Human?

What is the basis of the antagonism that renders the University an excellent replica of the Cirus Maximus? And whence arises the myth that sends professors after professor out and away on quests for ideal academic environments that somehow never materialize?

Why must administrators be ever on the alert to put down the latest uprising? Why rise up at all?

No Answers

To the above questions, there are no pat answers. There are pathetic fictions (It's Human Nature, etc.) that have a strong public exonerating, but have little relevance when they are analyzed by the social scientists. There are Law of the Jungle theorists who block any hope by insisting that Man is innately selfish. There are Class war theories and racist theories, and vegetarians, and Prohibitionists, and New Boston Church members.

William Arrowsmith has come to the Rice campus and pointed a finger at us all. Those of us who are here to (considered by the administrators of the University from the uttermost conception of the idea) the core of our democracy. There are those who have the expressed purpose of learning yet they do not learn. It would be a simple and cruelly false concept to state that those who do not make IT are either stupid or crazy. This cannot be true, but at the same time we must not even try. We must no longer suffer to have our ideas and our opinions on open discussion.

Hope

Dr. Arrowsmith has drawn the line for the teacher and for the admin-istrator; he has set up guidelines for the small college in its struggle to avoid absorption into the mainstream of techni-cality-centered scholarship. He has suggested the means that a large un-