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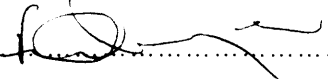Date .....21.11.08.........

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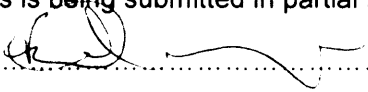
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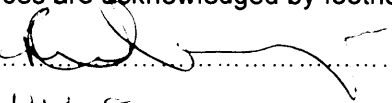Signed .... (candidate)

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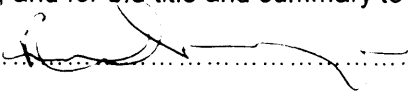Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references.

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The Carnival of Youth:

The Dramaturgy of the Sixties Counterculture

R.P. Watermeyer

Ph. D

Presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
at
Cardiff University

2008

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Abstract

This thesis is a study of anti-hegemonic, youth counterculture. It uses a retro-sampling of four aspects of the 1960s hippie counterculture, namely the Beats, Hippies, the Diggers and the Yippies. These are used as a case-study of a culture of resistance that are reapplied as signifiers of cultural and commercial distinction, fashioning a notion and ideal of youth. The thesis uses the theory of Bakhtinian carnivalesque to interpret the performance of dissident youth culture. It examines one fragment of subversive counterculture best described as performative. The performance of counterculture, its street happenings, Acid-Tests, Be-Ins, rock concerts and media pranks, are shown to be assimilated and transformed into commercial entities which are used to frame what it is loosely defined as a 'post-modern' cultural subjectivity. This study provides a reminder of the paradoxes of cultural endeavour, such as the local and global, commercial and cultural, and how anti-hegemonic counterculture is an explicit portrayal of this.

The performance of the hippie counterculture is shown as a process of constant reinvention and *bricolage*; enriching and challenging social perceptions and ways of living. The carnival of the American counterculture is a case-study of cultural antagonisms, which demonstrates how performance is infinitely adaptable and replicable for different user groups. Its music, which forms a central part of the thesis, is its legacy, a cultural landmark and recurrent means of expression channelling the voice of carnival, youth and the potential of an inverted world.

If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.

William Blake

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell
1790-1793

Dedication

For

My Ma,

Lorna Watermeyer.

Take it as read.

Acknowledgements

There are far too many people to whom I am indebted. Many whom I'm sure wish they had never, ever asked, 'So, what do you do?' Indeed, record of such gratitude would necessitate a further thesis.

Nonetheless, it is only right that I mention these few:

Most especially, Dr. Sara Delamont & Professor Paul Atkinson my mentors and friends who picked up the pieces and put me back together. Thank you is far from enough.

Dr. Ian Welsh
Thank you for your patience, understanding, enthusiasm and vision in helping me see the *infinite* possibility.

Dr. Duncan Campbell & Dr. Craig Phelan- who set me off on this peripatetic journey many moons ago. I made it.

Dr. Christopher Walsh- who has remained a constant source of advice and encouragement throughout, and who of course introduced me to the indomitable West Ham United.

To the many members of faculty and administration of the Cardiff School of Social Sciences, who have managed with varying degrees of success to culture this aspirant academic:

Professor. John Fitz, Dr. Michael Arribas-Ayllon, Dr. Stuart Tannock, Dr. Neil Selwyn, Professor. Richard Daugherty, Ms. Mel Evans and Ms. Helen Greenslade.

To my family, who have always stood by my behavioural vacillations and provided much in the way of emotional and financial support.

To my friends, particularly Mr. Matthew James and Mr. Mark Cashman who have done much, if not more of the same.

To the generous financial support of the E.S.R.C

& finally...

To my wife, Vikki Watermeyer, who now has to put up with what you lot above have gotten me into . . . for life!

THANKS

Content

<u>Section 1: APPROACH</u>

Section 2: CASE STUDY

Section 3: DISCUSSION

Personal Preface

This preface is a confessional clarifying the role and background of the researcher and the steps taken in shaping this research project. It contextualizes the origins and ambitions of this thesis.

The theatre is for me, the most obvious route towards cultural self articulation. As an undergraduate of English and Drama I was captivated by the theatre as a space where subjective experience is most realizable. The proscenium represents a space where the improbable is possible and the fixed, historical self, dematerializes. It offers a pathway to transcendence away from dominant cultural norms.

I first discovered on the stage, that the contingent is ubiquitous, truth is amorphous and multiple, and that the dramaturgical self, in constant flux, is open and fully democratic. As an artistic director I engaged with the wordplay and witticism of Wilde and the esotericism of Pinteresque pause and dialogical economy.

The theatre is a space for imagination to unfold, where masks and mirrors, light and smoke, costume and cosmetic make possible other worlds, other realities and critically, alternative articulations of the self. Notions of other (sometimes imaginary) realms and other subjective experience compelled me to higher (though not necessarily grander) encounters with alternative aesthetics and divergent expressions of consciousness. Critically I sought freedom from the prescribed modes of thinking and being. I was entranced by the writings of Beat literature and *Gonzo* journalism; mesmerized by the Wordsworthian notion of an eruption of consciousness and the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. I similarly felt bound on a pilgrimage of self-discovery with Kerouac's *Sal Paradise* on a road to some mythic freedom and *satori*.

It was at this same time that I became acquainted with and subsequently began collecting the whole back catalogue, bootlegs included, of Bob Dylan, got turned onto jazz, though any expertise on the subject remains elusive, and even tried rewriting a medieval canto with Ginsbergian inflection.

Having graduated, I began a year with the American Studies department at Swansea University were I taught in the capacity of Associate Tutor, taking classes on the writings of Benjamin Franklin, an early day John Gray. Having developed a proclivity for all things *Sixties*, I began a doctoral thesis on a part-time basis, studying the now infamous Rolling Stones concert at the Altamont Speedway. The promise of a stipend however never materialized; the project seemed doomed, never to see the light of day.

Not long afterwards, I found myself at Cardiff University, where I trained as a teacher of drama. I was once again acquainted with the wonderful alternative world of theatre. I read the works of Ibsen, Chekov and Lorca, voraciously, whilst developing a penchant for physical theatre and modern dance. At this time I attended a performance by the *Rambert* dance company whose performance synergized ballet with the early repertoire of the Rolling Stones. What I initially conceived as bizarre and unworkable, was in effect spellbinding and unsettling. It convinced me of the infinite potential of the performative in reaching unheralded bounds of expression and truth and as a route towards cultural evangelization. The potency of performance as a cathartic device became evermore apparent.

My educational career continued with an MSc in the Social Sciences. Unable to remain

exclusively rooted to a pedagogy of performance I explored how theatre might be used as

a rehabilitative medium for children suffering from emotional and behavioural

difficulties. A strange classification has presided over this group which I find not only

derogatory but entirely misleading. This is the vernacular of *dysfunction*. Looking back it

now calls to mind that group of individuals who constitute the basis of this study. Their

one description was the not, too dissimilar, *freaks*.

My MSc dissertation considered the efficacy of drama as a therapeutic medium, able to

restore an equilibrium to what are considered the violent behavioural and emotional

oscillations of *statemented* children. I spent time with some of these children in two

Special Educational Needs (SEN) units attached to schools in the Cwmbran area of South

Wales. There I discovered a riotous assembly of wonderfully articulate, creative,

energized and occasionally destructive and violent personalities. These were a cohort of

inventive and dissident voices, whose disruptive tendencies positioned them as aberrant

and separate from any mainstream education. They were most certainly vocal and highly

performative. For most of the time the children participated in drama class with

enthusiasm and aplomb. Interestingly it was in these sessions that the multiple masks

which the children tended to affect in the everyday slowly dropped off revealing aspects

of their original, and most often, vulnerable selves. This was sometimes quite a

frightening transition for the children as they dismantled the multiple identities they

projected and performed in front of teachers and their peers with defensive resolve. It

became apparent to me that whatever event or incident had detrimentally affected the

children in the first instance was the cause for their skillful use of alternate personality. Conscious enactment of role and setting provided a mirror illuminating facets of their bare character, and their uninhibited naked selves. In many respects this was an anti-theatre, using drama as a means to deconstruct the performed self. This was often forceful and painful, allied to notions of a *Theatre of Cruelty*, and the subjection of the body to violent exposure. I engaged with a plethora of literatures relating to dramatherapy and psychodrama, most notably Jennings (1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1997) Grainger (1997, 1999, 2000) and Goffman (1959). Paradigms concerning a presentation of self would later become integral to the doctoral investigation.

I attended a residential course in the practice of dramatherapy run by the Central School of Speech and Drama in London and Dublin. This involved session work which principally focused on improvisation. A setting and cast of characters were provided. What direction there was, was minimal and unobtrusive. Whole scenarios were played out. This was an exercise in reflexivity and was enormously helpful in locating the self. The residency was hugely self-informative, revelatory and frequently difficult and unnerving. Suffice to say I discovered a lot about myself, hitherto unknown.

Following the MSc I began my doctoral study. This is its product. This thesis locates my principal research interest which is explicitly bound in the use of dramaturgical and performance strategies and their application in determining the dissemination of diverse subjectivities. I focus on youth as a group with the greatest potential for identity work. I identify in youth, a work in process, a developmental model, intentionally unsettled and

culturally migrant. In this thesis youth is set apart as the principal agent influencing the creation and consumption of cultural traditions and accordingly as a group of skilled cultural producers and consumers.

As a teacher of sociology, the role of knowledge facilitator occurs to me as privileged and vital. The potential for new ideas and ways of thinking, empowering young minds and offering new vantage points is, it seems to me, critical in locating a sense of being and self in the world. This thesis argues that youth forms both the best opportunity for new cultural interpretations and performance yet is concurrently the most vulnerable cohort to face exploitation from the technologies it embraces.

I attest to the potential of the dramaturgical or more specifically the carnivalesque as youth's primary cultural means for cultural heterogeneity and as an assault on cultural hegemony and imperialism wrought by neo-liberalism. I situate myself as someone who purposively enlists the power of the dramaturgical in an effort to locate other realms and other possibilities.

Before I begin to unpack the fuller theoretical and methodological direction of this thesis, I would like to comment on a new cultural and global craze in which I was inadvertently caught up in. I recently visited London with my wife. We had just finished a tour of the National Gallery and had soaked up Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* and Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne*. Stopping in Trafalgar Square we accidentally stumbled upon an altogether different artistic exhibition. A large crowd suddenly assembled from nowhere. A horn

was blast and several video cameras emerged and began to weave between the gathering. I noticed that those assembled had freeze framed a pose. This lasted for what must have been five minutes. We were in the midst of a FlashMob. Police arrived but were powerless and seemed unsure to know what to do. There was clearly no direct threat posed by this action as a dramatic suspension of time. The five minutes ended and the crowd dispersed as quickly as it had assembled.

What struck me, funnily enough about myself, was how impressed I had been by the simplest of actions, how this had created a moment where time evaporated, and a recontextualisation occurred. I have heard colleagues lambaste this kind of activity as absurdist, meaningless and without any political or cultural significance. Perhaps though this is its point and power. Such action affected a far greater stirring of my senses, engaged a more potent democratic and participatory vista than my experience of the art gallery. This was art taken to the streets. The question remains was this art? If so what does it reveal? Does it reveal anything at all?

The absurdist strategies of the countercultural praxis of the 1960s are potentially not so far removed from this type of performance. What Camus (1942) determined as the absurdist condition of life is readily played upon by the FlashMob. Indeed this is its celebration. My own interest and the contribution of this thesis is to determine how modes of carnival and cultural performance exist as an infinite discourse which critiques, intentionally or not, established and received forms of knowledge and power.

Chapter 1
Thesis Overview and Content

Having situated the role of the researcher in the personal preface, this chapter introduces the intentions of the thesis. This involves an overview of the thesis, its principal aims and theoretical underpinnings, and synopsis of chapters.

1.1 Thesis Overview

This thesis is firstly a study of, what Roszak (1968) termed, the 'counterculture' of 1960s America. Secondly it is a discussion of how counterculture has re-emerged since the sixties as an aesthetic and commercial phenomenon that informs new strategies of (sub)cultural performance in the articulation of youth. Counterculture is approached as a cyclical process problematised by its situation as cultural aesthetic and cultural commodity. This study adapts the theory of *bricolage*, which Chambers (1987, 1990) and Hebdige (1988) use to situate multiple identity constructions through the appropriation of varied cultural commodities, to frame subculture. The thesis demonstrates that a process of borrowing and reordering diverse cultural signifiers facilitates new cultural subjectivities and commercial marketplaces.

I use aspects of Bakhtinian carnivalesque drawing most especially on the themes of death and renewal, cultures of resistance, alienation and the efficacy of collective performance to critique and rearrange dominant social and cultural frameworks. The argument made is that counterculture adapts aspects of carnival and in so doing provides an alternative paradigm for the performance of youth. This in turn however, is shown to be adapted by a consumer culture which transforms counterculture into a niche within the marketplace of mass society. This thesis demonstrates how the American sixties counterculture and subsequent subcultures, as framed by carnival, are both a remedy to consumer culture and extension of it.

I use the 1960s American counterculture as an example of a culture of resistance, of

carnival and *bricolage*. It is a potent illustration of the antagonistic relationship between

culture and commerce but also, as will be argued, how this relationship facilitates both

new forms of cultural expression and commercial realms. This study uses the 1960s

American counterculture, as a critique of mass society and mass consumption, and as the

starting point from which youth's post-modern subjectivity has evolved. I use a retro-

sampling of specific, performative, countercultural cadres, namely the Beats, Hippies,

Diggers and Yippies. These are approached as integral signifiers of anti-hegemonic youth

counterculture, which periodically reemerge. I claim that the performative strains of the

hippie counterculture are reused to express and shape a post-modern subjectivity. This

post-modern subjectivity is one mediated through different consumer articles or

lifestyles, and increasingly within a technological infrastructure, which problematizes

youths' claim for cultural authenticity and individualism. Post-modernism is used in the

course of the thesis as both a chronological referent which characterises the years from

1990 to the present and as a social theory situating contemporary culture.

The American counterculture of the 1960s is viewed as a forerunner to a post-modern era

framed by 'simulation', that is, 'the generation by models of a real without origin or

reality, a hyperreal.' (Baudrillard 1987b: 69). Counterculture and subsequent youth

subcultures, through a *bricolage* of styles which as a 'fusion and copy of the original'

(Eco 1987: 8), are seen to offer an antidote to hegemonic rationality (Beck 1992). This

study claims that the American 1960s counterculture is one past subculture that

permeates what Bauman (2002) describes as 'liquid modernity', and occurs as a

discourse facilitating alternative cultural realities:

> ...when all that is seen is so fragmented and filled with whimsy and pastiche the
> hard edges of the capitalist, racist and patriarchal landscape seem to disappear,
> melt into air. (Soja 1989: 245)

In the age of what Bauman (2000, 2002) calls 'light capitalism' and a time of fluidity,

uncertainty and heterogeneity, anti-hegemonic youth subculture counters the

anesthetization of youth cultural politics. Within a paradigm of 'life politics' and creative

consumption, or what Sassatelli (2007) calls 'alternative consumption', youth (as a social

grouping) locate a specific cultural articulation which is *other* to dominant forms of

expression and lifestyle; yet concurrently regulated by it. Nonetheless by drawing on

specific cultural forms or what Spring (2003) terms 'external goods' the cultural

consumer is empowered to navigate and locate cultural worth or 'internal goods'. Like

Fukuyama (1989) I suggest that:

> ...while man's very perception of the material world is shaped by his historical
> consciousness of it, the material world can clearly affect in return the viability of
> a particular state of consciousness. (Fukuyama 1989: 9)

This study locates a post-modern social experience which as a paradigm of production

and consumption generates unstable and ephemeral subjective meanings. I am interested

in seeing how types of cultural consumerism, experiential as much as materialistic,

provide alternative realities and cultural discourse. The act of cultural consumption has

since the 1960s evolved as a dramaturgical feast or carnival, harnessed by technology and

social developments. Anti-hegemonic youth subcultures are, a primal manifestation of

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this, which in conjunction with a range of social movements, occur increasingly within a global context (Chesters and Welsh 2004).

Baudrillard (1988b) claims that,

> History has stopped meaning, referring to anything- whether you call it social space or the real. We have passed into a time of hyperreal where things are being replayed *ad infinitum*. (Baudrillard 1988b: 182)

I have adapted Baudrillard to suggest that subcultures exist as a process of performance and theatre, existing within a paradigm of consumption and an epoch of post-modernity, which constantly evolve. It is a permanent revolution of *bricolage* and a form of performativity by which new cultural experiences and discourse become viable.

The post-modern self is one plagued by an insecurity wrought by what was supposed as the end of meta-narrative and ideology (Fukuyama 1992). This has been complicated in a post-9/11 world where Fukuyama's 'End of History' has lost credence and forced a retraction of such ideas. Post-9/11 new forms of meta-narrative are visible. This thesis argues that meta-narrative emerge from a process of constant cultural renewal and death. This process is understood using Bakhtinian carnival, which forms the theoretical approach of this thesis. The subcultural performance of youth is used as carnival's pre-eminent model.

The next section provides an outline of the thesis content.

1.2 Chapter Content

The thesis is arranged into three distinct parts. The first, including this chapter, introduces the basis of this research and describes its method and impetus. It also explains the theoretical approach by which the entire thesis is framed. This part encompasses Chapters 1 to 3.

The second part is more empirical and provides an historical overview of the events and personages which constitute the American counterculture of the 1960s. This includes Chapters 4 and 5 which deal with the Beats, Hippies, Diggers and Yippies. The third part returns to a more theoretical orientation and provides a discussion of counterculture through the performance of rock, the counterculture as contemporary subculture and an overview of counter/subculture as carnivalesque. This takes in the remaining Chapters of 6, 7 and 8.

Chapters 1 and 2 provide the foundation of this research situating what it is about and how it was conducted. Chapter 3 locates the theoretical framework of the thesis and is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the theory of carnivalesque and an introduction to the cultural theory which frames youth as counterculture. It details the theory of Bakhtinian carnivalesque set against Debord's (1967) theory of spectacle which is emblematic of the post-war mass society. It considers the carnivalesque as a cycle of life and death and constant renewal. Chapter 3 also examines the central tenets of polyphony, grotesque realism and absurdism. These are seen as contributing towards a repertoire of resistance. This section also interrogates subcultures as a performance of

post-modern *bricolage*, the homology of counterculture, counterculture as media assemblage and the product of a culture industry

The second section of Chapter 3 concerns the theoretical implications of historical research and the counterculture as collective and counter memory. This section offers a revision of counterculture which sees it less as a contested historical event and more a paradigm of cultural and commercial performance. This moves on to discuss the reemergence of counterculture as collective memory in the form of literature, theatre of protest, song, festival tradition and media reportage and that which disseminates alternative histories. This section accordingly also reflects the methodological design of the thesis and its constraints. In its conclusion, Chapter 3 considers that as counterculture is reclaimed through counter-memory it produces counter-knowledge.

Chapter 4 and 5 form the empirical basis of the thesis and detail the history of the counterculture. Chapter Four situates San Francisco as a site of American post-war bohemia and includes three sections. Section one portrays the economic and cultural climate of the 1950s and the critique of the mass society given by the Frankfurt School émigré Herbert Marcuse, and American liberal C. Wright Mills. This section offers another reading of American post-war affluence as that governed by technocracy, cultural uniformity and gross materialism. Section two deals with San Francisco as the site of a politics of deviancy and considers the Beats as an intellectual and literary movement that paved the way for the hippie counterculture which forms the basis of the third section. This final section discusses the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco as the home of

the sixties' hippie counterculture. It considers the homologous components of the hippies and pays particular attention to the use of LSD in the formation of a psychedelic community. The strategies of Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters and Timothy Leary form the crux of this discussion.

Chapter 5 considers countercultural performance as directed by the Diggers and Yippies. It begins with a discussion of Antonin Artaud's *Theatre of Cruelty* and *commedia dell'arte* which formed the theoretical basis of guerilla theatre. This moves on to consider the San Francisco Mime Troupe out of which the Diggers emerged. A discussion of the Diggers and their ambitions to create a free society with free stores, free feeds and free frames of reference follow. This culminates with a consideration of the Human Be-In, the Summer of Love and the transformation of the hippie into a media construct. The second part of this chapter deals with the Yippies as the mass dissemination of counterculture. This takes in the major Yippie media-freaking events which include the storming of the New York Stock Exchange, Black Flower Day, the levitation of the Pentagon and Chicago 1968: A Festival of Life.

Chapters 6 and 7 return to the more theoretical orientation of the thesis. Chapter 6 provides a thematic overview of the music of the counterculture. This considers rock music as a cultural aesthetic; the efficacy of popular music as a powerful cultural experience and form; rock music as what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) call a 'line of flight'; rock music as an 'authentic' cultural form; rock as technological innovation; rock

as mass communication; rock as the technological and pastoral in synergy; rock as work and the formation of the rock neo-tribe.

Chapter 7 discusses ways in which the counterculture occurs in a contemporary context as subculture. This considers counterculture as a commercial product and identity. It discusses the postmodern branded self; the role of advertising, assimilation and the incorporation thesis; counterculture as a corporate sponsored product and the advent of hip capitalism; real and fake counterculture; contemporary subculture; the marriage of commerce and counterculture; the becoming of consumer carnival; weekend subculture and neo-tribes. Chapter 7 also considers how the street is the prime site and signifier of subcultural carnivalesque.

Chapter 8, the conclusion, provides an overview of the key themes of the thesis and summarizes the central tensions. It also offers a new means of understanding subculture as global and technological, as collective memory and collective history. Chapter 8 examines youth subculture as that which can be a project of individualism and cultural creativity, utopianistic and counter-hegemonic and most especially something constantly evolving.

The next chapter locates the methodological approach to the thesis and the multiplicity of sources used throughout.

Chapter 2
Method and Sources

Chapter 1 offered an overview of the aims of this thesis, the chapters and the role of

the researcher in shaping these. This chapter details the approach to the thesis

detailing and justifying the types of literary resources used, how these were analysed

and how they fall across eight distinct chapters. This chapter precedes a discussion of

the theoretical approach of the thesis in Chapter 3 which moves onto the empirical

heart of the thesis in Chapters 4 and 5.

2.1 Research Agenda

I interpret the American youth *counterculture*[1] of the 1960s as a social category, an historical phenomenon, and example of the struggle for cultural 'authenticity'. Cultural 'authenticity' is applied in the course of the thesis as a social construct with a specific connotation, highlighting the antagonism of youth counterculture and capitalist enterprise. The category of *youth* is used less as a marker of biological transition or moratorium of 'structured irresponsibility'(Parsons 1963) but as representative of a generation marked by 'disillusionment with and opposition to older age groups' (Feuer 1969: 25). Similarly to Grossberg (1992) this thesis is less concerned with the referential accuracy that locates youth and more with the various discourses which constitute it. Nevertheless it is important to note that the faction of youth which constitute this study's research population was predominantly white and middle class.

This thesis situates the sixties' youth counterculture as a tribe and tradition which is, other than and antagonistic towards the paternal, or that seen to 'enjoy a consciousness of 'otherness' or difference' (Thornton 1995: 5). It positions the 1960s countercultural faction of youth as a culture of resistance that opposed established and dominant forms of cultural expression. In order to structure and frame an understanding of youth subculture I use the American 1960's counterculture as a case study and as a form of retro-sampling. I argue that this was the first anti-hegemonic, American, youth subculture of its kind.

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[1] Counterculture is a term first popularized by Roszak in *The Making of a Counter Culture* (1968) though it is featured in Parson's *The Social System* (1951).

This study provides an historical review of what is termed the dramaturgical exploits of the 1960s counterculture, reviewed as literature, theatre, music, drugs and politics. Critically, I do not suppose the 1960s counterculture was a definitive, historical group but an inchoate assemblage of dramaturgical strategies deployed by performers who sought to critique and subvert traditions of cultural hegemony. If the counterculture had a manifesto then it was at best contradictory, inconsistent and articulated by a melange of disparate actors. Cultural historians, Braunstein and Doyle (2002) suggest that the counterculture was

> ...an inherently unstable collection of attitudes, tendencies, postures, gestures, 'lifestyles', ideals, visions, hedonistic pleasures, moralisms, negations and affirmations. These roles were played by people who defined themselves first by what they were not, and then, only after having cleared that essential ground of identity, began to conceive anew what they were. (Braunstein & Doyle 2002: 10)

This is the clearest explication of counterculture and best situates my own interpretation of it. This research is preoccupied with the counterculture's diversity and plurality of cultural expression and performance; its many characters and scenes. This thesis centres on 1960's counterculture as an, albeit minute and contested[2], significant historical narrative, which I argue is adapted by subsequent generations of youth and their associative cultural industries as a means of subjective invention and dissemination. This forms a countercultural lineage which I suggest generates a fuller understanding of how contemporary countercultural strains and discourse have both come into being and exist. My claim therefore is that the 1960's counterculture is the source from which subsequent youth sub-cultures take their performative lead and from which the 1960s counterculture assumes immortality.

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[2] Most virulently by neo-conservatives such as Mansfield (1997) and Wolin (1997). The associative pathologies of the counterculture are also discussed in Bloom (1987)

The thesis provides an assessment of how dramaturgical schemes were used to generate and support youth counterculture, and how these have evolved and hold a continued relevance, indeed a primacy, in the production and dissemination of contemporary youth forms. It argues that the 1960s counterculture, as a paradigm of resistance, is adapted and re-assimilated in the production of youth culture. The counterculture's lexicon, fashion and ideology may be understood as a cultural scheme caught within a chronological cycle, which resurfaces periodically as an important means of subjective expression. The thesis claims that components of 1960s countercultural performance, its music in particular, are currently, in 2008, revisited, sanctioned and interfaced as valuable cultural forms, and which not only locate a historical past but articulate and facilitate an awareness of contemporary cultural performance. What I suggest is the repetition of a cultural theme.

This thesis however is not a complete study of a decade. It makes no detailed treatment of the more visited subjects of 1960s historical discourse such as the Vietnam War (Isserman & Kazin 2003); or the Civil Rights Movement (Hall 2006). My interest instead lies with the performance of 1960s counterculture and its application as a significant historical and cultural artefact which articulates youth as a culture of resistance. Clearly, this similarly occurs with other historical decades. A celebration of the art deco of the 1930s is currently prominent, observable in high and mass culture, across gallery installations and greeting card shops.

Furthermore I propose that the countercultural trends of the 1960s may not be simply inferred as the product of a specific time frame beginning on the 1st January 1960 and ending 31st December 1969. It is with good reason that I base an understanding of the

American counterculture as beginning with the Beat literary movement of the 1950s, that preceded it, and which is cited by some cultural historians as the point of its origin (Braunstein 2002, Cavallo 1999, Doyle 2002). I argue that cultural styles and trends are not fixed to historical compartmentalisation and that they filter through chronological periods. This is so with counterculture. I argue that the 1960's counterculture when understood as a dramaturgical scheme never ended. As such I consider counterculture as a process, subject to evolution and change with many stages and personas from Hippie and Mod to Punk. These are types of cultural identities that are not tied to their time of origin but are recast, reinvested and reworn at different historical junctures. This does however raise questions of cultural misrepresentation and the potential of the illegitimate heir.

The thesis engages with the notion of 'authenticity'. 'Authenticity' is used to express the struggle between the autonomous, independent and accordingly legitimate cultural subject / form and the commodified, commercially co-opted, ersatz cultural product. This thesis therefore consciously provides a critique of mass culture by youth and youth's situation within it. The 1960's countercultural scheme elicits a vivid depiction of this and is accordingly useful in fostering an understanding of the tension between contemporary youth cultures and their corporate manufacturers.

The next section considers the historical situation of the sixties' counterculture.

2.2 Historicizing the 1960s Counterculture- A Methodological Justification

Interpretations of counterculture are as ambiguous and unclear as the concept of youth. An array of themes and slogans are used to articulate it, such as communal living, marijuana, *Free Love*, *Flower Power*, and *Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out*. Through their popularisation these slogans tend towards pastiche. Without contextualisation such themes degenerate into catchpenny lyrics with little epistemological use or value. The aim of this thesis is to contextualise the 1960s counterculture within a notion of the carnivalesque. I approach and attempt to explain counterculture via the means of its performance and in relation to and against the sources of corporate power which enforce its co-option and against which counterculture claims an authenticity.

Initially I provide an historical background to situate the emergence of a 1960s counterculture. This includes documentation of an *Age of Affluence* and an *Age of Anxiety*, a socio-economic portrait of the United States post-World War II, and the emergence of the Beat fraternity of writers and poets. Supporting this is a discussion of the principal theorists of the time and their appraisal of the American cultural condition.

Next, I approach counterculture via the principal traits of carnivalesque, inversion and renewal, as manifest across theatre, music, festival and an anti-politics. Implicit to all four performative strategies is a culture of intoxication, and most especially the use of psychedelic drugs. Critically a discussion of all four schemes attempts to address and measure an authenticity claimed by each. This serves to ascertain the extent to which each dramaturgical strategy is a self-originating and autonomous construct of cultural

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ingenuity. It questions whether countercultural carnival is capable of articulating new

cultural discourse or is conversely a representation or simulacrum of such, a product

of commercial incorporation.

2.3 Method and Sources

I made use of a variety of textual sources for this study. The thesis employs a multi-disciplinary approach drawing on academic literature encompassing sociology, media and cultural studies. This 'method and sources' chapter details all of the different textual resources used and discussed within the course of the thesis and justifies their inclusion. Sources are drawn from different historical eras, schools of thought and countries of origin. For example, Adorno (1941) is used in conjunction with Habermas (1969) and Thornton (1995). This facilitates a discussion of transatlantic relations, cultural hegemony, globalisation and the Americanisation of culture.

The use of a broad cross-section of different textual resources demanded prudence when selecting material from each literary genre. Accordingly my decision to select specific textual materials was based upon their direct relevance to the themes inherent to counterculture itself. There are some dominant literatures and surveys of the 1960s which have not been used.

In the first instance Bakhtinian Carnivalesque (1965, 1981, 1984) was used to explore the performance of youth culture. This is set against Debord's (1969) theory of Spectacle which was found to be particularly useful in framing a sense of the mass society against which youth rebels. The theory of carnivalesque provides an effective means of understanding and interpreting youth culture as explicitly that in opposition to the established, dominant culture.

This thesis discusses the critical theory of members of the Frankfurt School, such as Marcuse (1964, 1969), Habermas (1969), Adorno (1941, 1950) the American

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liberalism of Wright Mills (1956) and the pivotal critique of Roszak (1968, 1972) to provide an understanding and awareness of the thesis of post-war, Western, American, mass society as it was unfolding. Furthermore, Frankfurt School émigrés, such as Marcuse, provide a useful means of eliciting the distinction between the 'old and ailing' world of Europe and the modern 'vitality' of America. Writers as diverse as Baudrillard (1986) and McKay (1997) were similarly helpful in identifying America as a vision of modernity, post-modernity and as a force of cultural domination. In approaching a discussion of cultural authenticity, hyperreality and postmodernism the work of Baudrillard (1981), principally his theory of simulacra, was essential reading, as Barthes (1977, 1980) and Sontag (1977).

Central to my discussion of theatrical and performative method was the work of Artaud (1958) and Goffman (1959). Artaud's theory of a *Theatre of Cruelty* was particularly helpful in gauging an understanding of the importance of the body as the root of expression and cultural transformation and change. Similarly, Rudlin (1994) was useful in understanding and exploring the improvisational theatre of *commedia dell'arte*. Goffman's (1959) analysis of social structures through dramatic performance located the dramaturgical basis of the self in the everyday and therefore provided an interpretation of countercultural theatre, not of the stage but the street. Further to this I found the work of the Situationist School and notably, Vaniegem (1967) beneficial in framing a sense of cultural revolution and its performance within the context of the 1960s. Melluci (1996) was similarly helpful in locating a sense of the 'playing self'.

I incorporate the work of the post-1960s generation of subcultural theorists drawn from the *Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies* (CCCS) at Birmingham, UK, notably Hebdige (1979), Hall & Jefferson (1976), Grossberg (1984, 1992, 1993) and Willis (1978). Such literatures proved to be particularly insightful providing a conceptual framework situating youth as a culture of resistance and facilitating an engagement with themes integral to the thesis principally cultural authenticity, postmodernism, consumption and sub-cultural ideology. These were similarly helpful in situating an understanding of the signification of style and theories of cultural production, principally homology and *bricolage*.

The empirical basis of this thesis is, similarly, drawn from a range of literary sources. These constitute contemporary academic historical and cultural studies of the 1960s counterculture as it is understood and interpreted today- Cavallo (1999); Burner (1997); Braunstein & Doyle (2002); Deloria (2002); Echols (2002); Farber (2002); Foster (1992); Guinness (1994); Goffman (2004); Green (1998); Lee & Shlain (1992); Mansfield (1997); Marwick (1989, 1999, 2000); Matusow (1984); Stevens (2000) . The selection process for this category was accordingly particularly challenging but also instrumental in generating an awareness of the multiple discourses framing attitudes and understandings of the Sixties' counterculture. Those accounts used were chosen as the principal and most respected accounts and interpretation of the counterculture, as identified by contemporary cultural critics and historians. Whilst highly informative and detailed such accounts were also critically reflexive and prompted me to consider other areas of exploration beyond the dominant narrative. There were very few if any historical accounts relating to the 1960s counterculture not at some point visited. Some accounts such as Mansfield (1997) and Matusow (1984)

were more damning whilst those such as Marwick (1989, 2000) were decidedly more optimistic. This demanded careful and judicious reading.

The internet was an invaluable point of access to testimonies and oral histories. It was also here that I discovered the archives of the Digger Papers, free for all, as they would have liked, and considerable evidence of not only a shrine of 1960s ephemera but a visible and active contingent of countercultural devotees, message boards, blogs and online campaigns (www.woodstock69.com). There was an inherent danger to such online research in that as liberal leaning researcher it was all too easy to be seduced by the appeal of the anti-Spectacle, hippie mantra and spectacle of Woodstock. The internet as a museum of 1960s culture is also manifestly prejudiced, or at least heavily partisan. There are far fewer sites designed for its denigration than those of its consecration, the odd exception being such sites as www.ihatehippiesandcommunists.blogspot.com. Nonetheless I was able to draw a contrast between those sites eliciting memories and those of comment and discussion.

Other online sites used during the course of this study and helpful in an appraisal of 1960's political legacy are www.democracynow.org and www.newleftreview.com. These are important online domains of critique and dissent against American corporate and cultural hegemony and its global imperialism. They serve as a cogent reminder of the efficacy of the communicative strategy and dramaturgical method of pressure groups in challenging dominant and militant forms of power.

The variety of different historical narratives witnessed across academic chronicles, personal narratives, heritage sites, and discussion forums, facilitated an awareness of

how contested the 1960s is, how it has many incarnations, but also critically how little

is written about its counterculture as a dramaturgical paradigm beyond a plethora of

rock biographies.[3]

Another literary source was the memoirs of those who participated, directly or not,

within the countercultural scheme – Gitlin (1993), Hayden (2005), Gaskin (1990), Di

Prima (1998) and Hoffman (1968, 69). These provide insight into the minds of those

forming the 1960's zeitgeist and in the case of Gitlin and Hayden, a valuable

discussion of how the 1960s is reinterpreted forty years later.

There are another three categories of historical resources used within the thesis. The

first category is that of the cultural and political manifesto. I made use of the *Digger*

Papers (1968) of the Haight-Ashbury Diggers and the *Port Huron Statement (PHS)*

(1962) of the New Left movement's Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) as the

principal manifestos framing both hippie and student movements.

The first is a collection of documents that arguably forms the closest thing to a written

hippie ideology. The Digger Papers constitute a series of street articles, denouncing

capitalism, private ownership and championing a *free* society. It was written for and

by members of the Digger group of Haight-Ashbury, drew on literary works as

diverse as theatre theorist Antonin Artaud and Beat poet Gary Snyder and provided an

inventive social critique with subject titles ranging from *Dialectics of Liberation,*

Take a Cop to Dinner and *Trip Without a Ticket.* It provided an invaluable source in

helping to determine the Diggers as an important historical group integral to the

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[3] On the 25/3/08 a book search for 'Bob Dylan' on www.amazon.co.uk yielded 519 results.

countercultural ethic. It furthermore provided a sound basis from which to explore

what they actually understood and meant by a *free* society. Little is mentioned of the

Diggers within the main historical accounts surrounding the counterculture and I am

still uncertain why. Nonetheless this archive represented an invaluable resource not

only in forming an understanding of the Diggers but the wider Haight-Ashbury

community.

The Port Huron Statement is a document espousing the doctrine and strategy of the

student political activists of the 1960s and their call for a 'participatory democracy'. It

relates to the empowerment of the individual as a political authority and articulates a

vision of self-governance. It is an espousal for collective, decentralised decision

making and a framework of social relations determined not by federal government but

the local community. In many respects the Port Huron Statement works as the more

formalised, theorised and intellectualised version of the Digger Papers. The two main

claims of both, a free society and participatory democracy, are not so far removed.

The critical difference separating the two is the means of their dissemination, one seen

to work within the dominant system and the other outside of it. The choice of these

two documents was made thus to facilitate an understanding of the different forms of

political and (self billed) apolitical expression. Interestingly whilst the Port Huron

Statement, is, in 2005, given a makeover, new jacket and new introduction by its

author (Senator Tom Hayden) and retails at $11.86 (www.amazon.com[4]), the free

Digger Papers (www.diggers.org), are barely mentioned in dominant accounts of the

period. Critically these are two different types of history. Whilst the PHS through its

mass consumption and dissemination attains the status of 'The Visionary Call of the

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[4] As of March 21st 2008

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1960s Revolution', hardcopies of the Digger Papers are a collector's item, which

speaks volumes for its scarcity (though accessible on the web). Nonetheless these

documents are invaluable as primary sources articulating the (anti)politics and

counterculture of youth.

The second category consists of the various literary works which I claim enrich an

understanding of countercultural performance. In order to situate a background to the

1960s counterculture it was necessary to draw upon the literary output of the *Beat*

Generation. Furthermore as a backdrop to the counterculture, *Beat* literature is

representative and indicative of many key associative themes of alienation, freedom

and tribalism all played out with an overt sexism and chauvinism which would

pervade the rhetoric of both *Beat* and *Hippie* generations. The thesis accordingly

draws on the writings most especially of Kerouac (1957, 1958), Ginsberg (1956) and

Ferlinghetti (1958). It should be noted however that whilst some Beat luminaries such

as Ginsberg went on to champion the sixties counterculture others, such as Kerouac

opposed it.

The thesis also made use of older European literatures such as Camus (1942a, 1942b,

1947), Huxley (1932, 1954), Hesse (1927) and Kafka (1925, 1926) as important

ideological texts for both *Beat* and *Hippie* countercultures. Such works engage with

themes of existentialism and absurdity to name but two, and were key readings for the

ideological development and justification of both *Beat* and to a lesser extent *Hippie*,

American countercultures.

During the course of this study I investigated and read as much as possible from the

American literary canon, forming the third literary category, which situated the full

spectrum of the American cultural personality. The majority of such readings were from the twentieth century. The writings of Whitman (1855), Steinbeck (1937, 1939), Salinger (1951), Selby Jnr. (1957), Vonnegut (1992, 1993), Kesey (1962, 1964), Auster (2001), Coupland (1991, 2006) and DeLillo (1992, 1998, 2003) were all massively influential in allowing me to claim a sense of the diversity of America, its dream-like quality, instability, self-contestation and ability to be everything but nothing at all and at once as a chamber of commerce and mausoleum of culture. As Baudrillard (1988) claims,

> America is neither dream nor reality. It is a hyperreality. It is a hyperreality because it is a utopia which has behaved as from the very beginning as though it were already achieved. Eveything here is real and pragmatic, and yet is all the stuff of dreams too. (Baudrillard 1988: 28).

On reflection it is interesting to note that those writers whom I align with the twentieth century American literary canon are all men. The omission of any female writers such as Jean Rhys was entirely inadvertent. This in itself seems to be demonstrative of the gendered division and stratification that demarcates American culture and which permeated Beat and Hippie countercultures.

The literary nuances that pervade the thesis are an important aspect of its telling and discussion. These are important facets enabling an understanding of America. They provide a native interpretation unavailable to the European gaze. Whilst I interpret such writings from my own Eurocentric perspective, their tenor is unmistakably and irreducibly American. I suggest that a non-native researching and writing about a sub-cultural group like Thompson's (1966) *Hell's Angels*, might miss the important

cultural nuances so vital to its study and depiction. Accordingly I have digested a sample of 'The Great American Novel' and incorporated this as a means of eliciting the schizophrenic and multi-layered American cultural subjectivity and the 1960s counterculture, as its most emphatic manifestation.

Another site of important literature belonging to the 1960s is that of early popular American cultural criticism. Whyte (1956), Mailer (1956), Riesman (1961) and Reich (1970) were key texts helping me to situate a popular critique of the mass society and the potential of countercultural change. Similarly contemporary cultural criticism, Klein (2001), Heath & Potter (2005), Frank (1997), Goodman (1998), Lasn (2000) were also profitable. These offered an additional contribution towards an understanding of America's 1960's counterculture and its situation as a cultural episode and artefact which continues to impact upon current cultural trends. Heath & Potter (2005) and Frank (1997) in particular, are integral to the analysis of how counterculture becomes consumer culture.

The works of Watts (1957, 1960) and Leary (1965, 1968) were similarly indispensable in locating the spiritual motivations of psychedelia, Eastern mysticism and Zen and Beat Zen and the application of consciousness expanding drugs. These were complemented by the contemporary critiques of Lee and Shlain (1992) and Selvin (1994) in a consideration of LSD and a Summer of Love.

Another major source of data used within the thesis was journalism. There are potentially five different types of journalism used and interpreted within the thesis; these constitute broad-sheet (*New York Times*), popular lifestyle (*Life*), music

journalism (*Rolling Stone*), new journalism (*Esquire Magazine*) and underground press (*San Francisco Oracle*). The booming media industry of the 1960s allowed for new techniques in the production of press and its distribution. Furthermore new types of journalism emerged, principally *New* and *Gonzo*. While *New* Journalism borrowed techniques from literary fiction, detailing scenes with full dialogue from the narrator's point of view, *Gonzo* also written as a first person narrative interweaved fact with fiction to impress an underlying sentiment. The *New* Journalism used and encountered within the course of this thesis is Wolfe's (1968) *Electric Kool Aid Acid Test* which captures the subjective reality of Ken Kesey and the *Merry Pranksters*, Mailer's (1968) *Armies of the Night*, which reports the march on the Pentagon and Didion's (1968) *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* which portrays the writer's experiences of San Francisco and with the title essay, her impression of the bohemian enclave of Haight Ashbury. Gonzo journalism is best illustrated by the work of Thompson (1966, 1971) *Hells' Angels* and *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, which document the reporter's experiences of the motorcycle fraternity and LSD inspired excavation of the American Dream, respectively.

My intention has not been to provide an actual treatment of these literatures but to use them, in constructing a narrative which best exemplifies the mood and character of counterculture. Other texts belonging to *New* Journalism such as Capote (1958, 1965) were not considered relevant enough to the empirical content of the thesis.

The categories of *New* journalism and what I have called *popular lifestyle* can sometimes come to mean the same thing, or at least overlap. Many of the *New* journalists published their work in the burgeoning lifestyle press such as *The New*

Yorker and *Esquire*. Other lifestyle periodicals such as *Life* and *Time* have also been used in the course of this study, but less in maintaining a narrative and more as a reflection of mainstream America's interpretation of counterculture. A further category related to both is that of music journalism, best exemplified by *Rolling Stone*, first published in 1967. *Rolling Stone* is highly significant as a publication which ran as the voice of counterculture, but according to the diktats of corporate culture and practice. Music journalism is a particularly significant and useful textual source with many of its accounts and critiques taken from those with direct experience of countercultural practice. Such testimonies or vignettes operate as first hand accounts substantiating an invaluable expression and portrait of the counterculture's diverse lifestyle dynamics, its choices, ambitions and *ideology*. The rock journalism of Gleason (1969), Williams (1967), Lydon (1967) and Marcus (1969) provide an invaluable insight into the burgeoning youth culture and the fomentation of a rock rebellion. However in order to balance the occasional over zealous optimism of rock journalism, I have employed the more academic and disciplined critique of commentators such as Eyerman and Jamison (1998) Frith (1988, 1996) Grossberg (1984, 1993), Regev (1994) and Wicke (1982, 1990).

The final two types of journalistic literature are entirely antithetical to each other. In the course of the thesis I used the mainstream reportage of daily newspapers of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* as two of the most prominent and influential papers in the United States, alongside the underground and alternative press of *The San Franciso Oracle*, the rainbow newspaper of the Haight-Ashbury counterculture. These were accessed via online archives although some sources were found in hardback collections. Mainstream broadsheet press reports from both the 1960s and

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the present offer not only a window to past common (mis)conceptions framing the 1960s but also present common (mis)conceptions. I chose these two broadsheets for their status as two of the most widely read and influential newspapers in the United States (www.BurrellsLuce.com), which provide more of a generalised, detached survey distinct from the more parochial, if not tribal, orientation of alternative press. The alternative press of the *San Francisco Oracle* was a particularly useful resource as the principal copy of the Haight Ashbury hippie. There is a multitude of other alternative press belonging to the 1960s such as *The Village Voice* (N.Y), *The East Village Other* (N.Y), *The Berkeley Barb* (CF), *The Berkeley Tribe* (CF) and *The Los Angeles' Free Press* (CF), and too many for the purposes of this thesis. This is a platform for future research.

There are two other sources of data which were integral to the course of this study and complementary to the primary textual data. These were music and film. I now provide a short account which contextualises my own mixed method approach.

In 1999, the final year of my undergraduate study at Swansea University, I bought tickets to Ken Kesey and the Merry Prankster's 'Where's Merlin' tour of Britain. Spoken word, rapping and psychedelic folk merged with archive footage from their 1960's tour of America. The Prankster's day-glo school bus, Further, was centre stage. I had no idea as to how the night would unfold. I had read of the Acid Tests in Haight-Ashbury, and the lysergic adventures of the Dead. This time however the Kool-Aid was un-spiked. Nonetheless I was impressed by the use of different performance mechanisms in creating an artistic whole, a full cultural experience. This theatre of sorts was multi-modal, participatory, and captivating. Word, music,

and motion picture combined to create an unrepeatable event. Much like the Acid-Tests, 'Where's Merlin?' represented a carnivalesque escapade, a suspension of disbelief and momentary diversion from the dominant reality.

Not much later I began what would be the beginning of a lengthy process which culminated with this thesis. My early research into the American counterculture at Swansea University's Department of American Studies would bring me into email communication with Ken Kesey. I only ever received one email from him. It was in the form of a haiku and its meaning was as elusive as my initial encounter with the Pranksters. Kesey died on the 10th November 2001. I never saved the email and can not claim to remember its content; I sincerely wish I did. Nevertheless what struck me most was the style of his response.

The haiku in English is assembled from three short parts and of seventeen syllables which constitute the whole. They seem incredibly simple and unitary yet work much like the performance of counterculture or carnival – a togetherness soldered by word, image and sound. The haiku is all three. It is based on rhythmic words summoning an artistic vision. It is multi-modal. It is fully performative.

In a similar way I have used a multi-modal approach in the production of this thesis. I have not relied solely on textual materials but music, photography and cinema. This I argue acknowledges the full extent of the 1960's peformative strategy and the means by which it is understood and re-enacted.

Since 2001, I have listened to on radio, vinyl, CD and now download, watched on television, VHS, DVD, Web-stream, experienced live, and have generally consumed and attended to the back catalogue of 1960's American rock music. I began with Bob Dylan (1962, 1963, 1964a, 1964b, 1965a, 1965b, 1966) and then made my way through: Crosby, Stills, Nash (1969, 1970), Country Joe and the Fish (1967), Neil Young (1968, 1969, 1970, 1972), The Grateful Dead (1967, 1968, 1969, 1970), The Jefferson Airplane (1966, 1967, 1968, 1969), The Band (1968, 1969, 1970), Big Brother and the Holding Company (1967, 1968), The Doors (1967a, 1967b, 1968, 1969), Creedence Clearwater Revival (1968, 1969, 1970), Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention (1966, 1967, 1968), Ritchie Havens (1967, 1968), Leonard Cohen (1967, 1969), The Byrds (1965, 1967, 1968, 1969), and The Velvet Underground (1967, 1968, 1969). All of these are an invaluable and rich resource, able to articulate and confer, sometimes with greater affect than the written word, the zeitgeist of the 1960s youth and counterculture. Music as such, is an integral facet of this thesis, not only as a line of investigation but also as a form of data. In the new introduction to the 1995 edition of the *Making of a Counterculture*, Roszak (1995) states that the one aspect of the 1960s counterculture untreated in his monograph and deserving of attention, is its music. This is a costly omission. Much of what the counterculture strove to be and what it fought against is captured in this music. It articulates the countercultural ambition for alternate, free and evolving subjectivities, its dissatisfaction, dislocation, alienation, and rejection of the paternal and dominant forms of ideology and power. As a recorded package with art work and liner notes the autonomous creativity and self-invention of countercultural musicians emerges. Of course not all of the bands I have listed belonged to the countercultural cadre. Indeed

some of these such as the Mothers of Invention, were if not suspicious, entirely dismissive of the hippie counterculture.

1960s rock music can be broken up into many categories, many artificial, invented by record companies, music press and other 'PR' machines. There are those, like The Jefferson Airplane and Grateful Dead who belonged to the San Francisco Sound of Acid Rock, others such as Zappa and the Mothers of Invention who rejected what they perceived as the sanctimonious affectation of the Haight Hippie but who shared a proclivity for sonic experimentation. Then there are others of a more overtly political bent such as Country Joe and the Fish or those, like the Doors and Janis Joplin whose main interest was hedonistic abandon. In some respects the latter two were more open in admitting the base implications of rock music, '…music isn't supposed to make you riot. It's supposed to make you fuck' (Joplin quoted in Cavallo 1999: 149).

Much of the 1960s American counterculture was organised, arranged and expressed through the medium of music. From small social gatherings, to the Acid Tests and Human Be-In music was the primary method and source of coalescence. Newport, Monterey and Woodstock could not have existed without it. Music was the foundation and social framework and network to which the counterculture harnessed itself. It provided a route to the self and a means of self-expression and identity. More importantly, music crossed barriers of language, culture and geography. Indeed,

> More than underground newspapers, more than political speeches at
> demonstrations, more than cosmic gurus, the sound that was near-constantly in

the ears of the great mass of America's counterculturally inclined youths came from their stereos. (Goffman 2004: 303)

The rock music of the 1960s, and principally the psychedelic rock, is accordingly a major and integral resource structuring this thesis. The high cultural status ascribed to American 1960s rock music in the contemporary climate of rock journalism, also makes this investment all the more significant.

Bob Dylan, for one has been hard to avoid recently. A spate of television programming[5], the first instalment of an autobiography[6], three critically acclaimed albums since 1997[7], a show on BBC Radio 2[8], documentary by celebrated filmmaker Martin Scorsese[9], the re-release of the classic D.A Pennebaker film of his 1966 tour *Don't Look Back*, and the continuation of his *Never-Ending Tour* attest to this. What this suggests is that the work, past and present, of 1960s musicians, has progressed and transformed from a cultural commodity to a celebrated artistic form. Dylan, draws comparisons with the romantic poet John Keats, is labelled as the man who changed the course of popular music and who not only defined a generation for historians but for the people of that generation themselves. In a discussion of Dylan's 1965 masterpiece, *Highway 61 Revisited*, Gray (2000) comments,

> The whole rock culture, the whole post-Beatle pop-rock world – in an
> important sense the 1960 started here. It isn't only 'Like a Rolling Stone' and
> the unprecedentedly long Armageddon epic 'Desolation Row': it's every

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[5] A full season on BBC 2 dedicated to Dylan
[6] 'Dylan, B. (2004) *Chronicles Vol: One*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
[7] *Time out of Mind* (1997), *Love and Theft* (2001) and *Modern Times* (2006) (Columbia Records)
[8] *Bob Dylan's Theme Time Radio Hour*
[9] *No Direction Home* (2006)

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song...There it all was in one bombshell of an album, for a generation who

only recognised what world they were living in when Dylan illuminated it so

piercingly. (Gray 2000: 5)

Any consideration or analysis of the 1960s counterculture, and in particular its

dramaturgical strategy would accordingly be entirely bereft and underwhelming

without examination of its music.

Whilst my reading and listening of all things 1960's provided a vivid picture,

appreciation and means to interpret its counterculture, there was but one last media

source to engage, the motion picture. This was the final data source used during the

thesis and constitutes the final section of this methodological discussion.

There are a selection of highly successful and acclaimed films made within the 1960s

which explore aspects of the countercultural thesis and which were helpful in the

course of this study– *Dr. Strangelove* (1964)[10], *The Graduate* (1967)[11] and *Midnight*

Cowboy (1969)[12]. Similarly I encountered two films of the 1950s, *The Wild One*

(1953) and *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) which were helpful in conceptualising the

theme of youth. Despite the fictionalised context of these films they nonetheless

constitute a type of historical documentation. They are an important record of some of

the dominant social concerns percolating through the 1960s. Interestingly however a

full cinematic treatment of the Vietnam war, what Anderson (2006) calls the heart-

beat of the 1960s, would not occur until the 1970s and early 1980s with films such as

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[10] 4 American Academy Award nominations
[11] 1 Academy Award Win (Best Director- Mike Nichols) and a further 6 American Academy Award nominations.
[12] 3 American Academy Award Wins (Best Director- John Schlesinger, Best Picture- Jerome Hellman, Best Writing- Waldo Salt) and a further 4 nominations.

The Deer Hunter (1978), *Apocalypse Now* (1979), *Platoon* (1986) and *Full Metal Jacket* (1987). Whilst I provide no detailed treatment of the Vietnam War it would be negligent not to acknowledge it as a significant and constituent part of 1960s cultural discourse. Nonetheless, for the purposes of this thesis the theme of Vietnam is better interfaced via the music of the 1960s than its cinema.

It is important to note that I do not provide a study of 1960s cinema per se but draw on specific examples of it to elucidate themes of counterculture. Two films in particular were helpful in gauging a sense of the counterculture and as told by it. These are *Easy Rider* (1969) and *The Trip* (1967). These two films are distinguishable from those already mentioned as written by and for the counterculture. Both interestingly feature the same lead cast of Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper, and both feature Jack Nicholson, though in The Trip, in the capacity of writer. These are important cinematic documents which more than a survey or secondary interpretation offer a firsthand account of their milieu.

I purposely stayed away from incorporating the television of the 1960s as a primary data source. As a media category, sixties' television is too vast for the intentions of this thesis and any treatment would have been entirely superficial. It is better considered as a separate study. Nonetheless television programming which uses the 1960s as its setting such as the *Wonder Years*[13] and *Mad Men*[14] was beneficial in providing a modern media interpretation of American history.

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[13] First aired 1988
[14] First aired 2007

The next chapter follows on from this in providing a theoretical framework around

which the thesis is built.

Chapter 3
Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction and Sources

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the methods and sources used in the course of the thesis. This chapter considers its overarching theoretical concerns and approach. It is divided into two sections. The first considers cultures of resistance within the theoretical framework of carnivalesque. The second explores how this is preserved today as collective and counter memory. This sets up the two predominant themes of the thesis: the constant reinvention of culture through the adaptation of past cultural narratives and its transformation into a consumable artefact. A range of subcultural theorists are drawn on to unpack how youth occurs as a culture of resistance. This chapter draws on a range of sources which I have separated into four distinct categories.

A discussion of Spectacle and Carnivalesque was approached via their principal theorists: Debord (1967) and Bakhtin (1981, 1983), respectively. Critiques of these theories from Elliot (1999); Morson & Emerson (1992); Stallybrass & White (1986) and Vice (1997) were further helpful in unpacking their central motifs. A number of cultural and subcultural theorists are used in this chapter and their ideas permeate the entirety of the thesis. These include Adorno (1967, 1973, 1991); Adorno & Horkheimer (1979); Barker (2006); Best (1995); Chambers (1987); Clarke (1976); Hall (1977; 1996e); Hebdige (1979, 1988); Jameson (1984); Knabb (2006); Kristeva (1980); Lasch (1980, 1985); Strinati (1995), Thompson (1995); Thornton (1995); Tomlinson (1991) and Willis (1978). A discussion of memory, counter-memory and counter-narratives was aided by the work of Foucault (1977); Fukuyama (1989); Hobsbawm (2007); Lyotard (1984); Roszak (1995) and Wolin (1997).

A fourth and final literary category was that of memory and counter-memory. For this I

applied the work of Bodnar (1992); Confino (1997); Halbwach (1980); Huyssen (1995);

Le Goff (1992); Nova (1992); Olick & Robbins (1998) and Sturkin (1997).

3. 2 Chapter Overview

This chapter is designed to make explicit the theoretical approach of this thesis. This situates and justifies the primary areas of investigation and the theoretical approaches. Carnivalesque, spectacle, commodity, détournement, bricolage, homology, cultural cyclicism, polyphony, collective memory, genealogy and counter-memory are key terms, and these are defined and elaborated below.

This thesis visits the 1960s as a preeminent site of cultural resistance where dramaturgical and performative technologies were harnessed in an effort not only to resist but change the mass society. I apply the theoretical paradigm of Bakhtinian carnivalesque as the most apposite which most readily interprets the emergence of a 1960's culture of resistance; its adaptation and iteration as a contemporary cultural discourse. The carnivalesque locates a cultural restoration which resists established modes of power and dominant forms of cultural production which it states are undemocratic and oppressive. These are what constitute Debord's (1967) theory of spectacle which is used to elucidate and critique the mass society. The theory of spectacle suggests,

> ...the often violent and oppressive social control that masquerades as a celebration of betterment by recycling pseudo-reforms, false desires, and selective sightings of progressive evolution, never devolution. (Boje 2001: 7)

The next section provides a full treatment of this theoretical position, opening with the Spectacle.

3.3 Spectacle

Guy Debord was a French revolutionary poet, writer and filmmaker and leader of the

Situationist International Group that help inspire and influence the French uprisings of

1968. Debord (1967) situates Spectacle as disguising hegemonic forms of production and

consumption with a masquerade of corporate philanthropy, which claims humanistic

progress:

> THE SPECTACLE MANIFESTS itself as an enormous positivity, out of reach
> and beyond dispute. All it says is: "Everything that appears is good; whatever is
> good will appear." (Debord [1967] 1995: 15)

The performance and narrative of Spectacle are observable in the marketing campaigns of

multi-national corporations who distribute their wares as tools of liberation (Frank 1998).

A bombardment of corporate image is seen to intoxicate consumer consciousness and

legitimize the *Nike* plimsoll or *Apple I-Pod* as lifestyle essentials (Lury 1996). This forms

the business of Spectacle. Spectacle is what,

> ...has already secured by means of its incontrovertibility, and indeed by its
>
> monopolization of the realm of appearances' an acquiescent and impotent public
>
> realm, subjugate to the domination of modes of production and consumption
>
> (Debord [1967] 1995: 15).

The Spectacle represents an impasse of cultural enterprise. It was seen by the

Situationists as a cataract to cultural imagination and anesthetic to social endeavour; the

suffocation of a creative consciousness:

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The spectacle is the bad dream of modern society in chains, expressing nothing more than its wish for sleep. The spectacle is the guardian of that sleep. (Debord [1967] 1995: 18)

Debord's theory of Spectacle is used to explain the model of Western capitalism and the principles of scientific management which constitute the mass society. Spectacle suggests a way of seeing and being seen which countercultural performance through carnival seeks to revise and reposition. Debord uses Spectacle to expose cogently the dominion of abusive autocracy; '...the self-portrait of power in the age of power's totalitarian rule over the conditions of experience' (Debord [1967] 1995: 19). The mass media are emblematic of Spectacle, representing the monologism and political bias of instant communication:

> ...communication is thus *one-way*; the concentration of the media thus amounts to the monopolization by the administrators of the existing system of the means to pursue their particular form of administration. (Debord [1967] 1995: 19-20)

Debord argues that cultural alienation and the disenfranchisement of the individual from self and community is the abiding strategy of control:

> 'THE SPECTACLE'S FUNCTION in society is the concrete manufacture of alienation' (Debord [1967] 1995: 23).

The strategies of performance examined in this thesis are shown to be antithetical to processes of social division, instead locating the individual as one within a collective of social activity. Youth culture will be portrayed as a forceful articulation of alienation. Its

fissure from the paternal is the most emphatic demonstration of this. The 1960s is the full

realization of this, where,

> With the emergence of specialized, universalized and rationalized occupational and adult roles in capitalist society there was a discontinuity between the family and the wider society. Such a rupture needed a cultural space of transition, training and socializing for young people. This marked not only the category of youth but also a moratorium of 'structured responsibility' between childhood and adulthood. Here youth culture was able to emerge. (Barker 2006: 375)

The next section considers the Spectacle as a commodity form.

3.4 The Commodity

The Spectacle of the American 1950s and 1960s was directly rooted in an age of economic prosperity, post-scarcity (lasting until the oil crisis of 1973) and epoch of mass consumerism. This era is identifiable as a period of mass consumerism, the principal source of countercultural parody and disdain, and what is later explained as carnival grotesque. This period was not only an era of material abundance but of public anxiety caused by the Cold War and the possibility of nuclear holocaust. The Spectacle of commodity assuaged the public fear and paranoia embedded within President Johnson's (1963-1969) *Great Society*[1], whose series of economic and social programmes aimed at eradicating poverty negated the claim of American affluence. Nevertheless, mass consumption was used as a means of distraction serving not only to placate the public and neutralize the potential for civil unrest but heighten government powers of social control engendering the extension of what Mills (1956) termed the 'Power Elite'.

One of the strategic effects of mass consumerism is cultural homogeneity. This Baudrillard argued was the cultivation of a singular, one dimensional style:

> Work, leisure, nature and culture, all previously dispersed, separate, and more or less irreducible activities that produced anxiety and complexity in our real life...have finally become mixed, massaged, climate-controlled, and domesticated into the simple activity of perpetual shopping. All these activities have finally become desexed into a single hermaphroditic ambience or style. (Baudrillard 1988: 34)

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[1] Johnson's Great Society constituted a set of domestic programmes intended to eradicate poverty and racial inequality.

Baudrillard develops the thesis of the consumer society one step further. He claims that the commodity is imbued with a sign-value made visible within consumer exchange. This he suggests constitutes a new medium of social communication:

> Marketing, purchasing, sales, the acquisition of differentiated commodities and object/signs- all of these presently constitute our language, a code in which our entire society communicates and speaks of and to itself. (Baudrillard 1988: 48)

The commodity is adopted as the dominant route for individual and collective expression which contains social experience and interaction in a highly visible and preordered organizational framework. Baudrillard (1988) and Debord (1967) argue that the commodity has infiltrated every aspect of social life culminating in a preordained and facile subjectivity:

> THE SPECTACLE CORRESPONDS to the historical moment at which the commodity completes its colonization of social life. It is not just that the relationships to commodities is now plain to see- commodities are now all that there is to see; the world we see is the world of commodity. (Debord [1967] 1995: 29)

The spectacle is seen to have territorialized every functional aspect of the social realm:

> In all its specific manifestations- news or propaganda, advertising or the actual consumption of entertainment- the spectacle epitomizes the prevailing model of social life. It is the omnipresent celebration of a choice already made in the sphere of production, and the consummate result of that choice. (Debord [1967] 1995: 13)

For Debord (1967) the commodity co-opts and reconfigures social landscapes. It makes experience universal, adaptable and critically, forms a subjectivity forged through consumption. An alienation from what Debord claims as organic and 'authentic' expression, or social discourse which is outside dominant frameworks of mediation such

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as news or propaganda, necessarily enlarges. Debord's idea of 'authentic' expression is however contestable. This thesis will show how 'authentic' expression exists both within and outside of dominant and even hegemonic social frameworks.

Debord (1967) argues that the commodity situates a framework from which all social discourses emerge. He claims that even rebellion itself is a product of commodification. A corporate annexation (and consequent dilution) of repertoires of resistance implies that,

> ...dissatisfaction itself becomes a commodity as soon as the economics of affluence find a way of applying its production methods to this particular raw material. (Debord [1967] 1995: 38)

To counter the prevalence of a consumer society and the constant transition (or usurpation) of culture from oppositional to mainstream, new strategies of social, inherently performative, interaction appear which redefine social relationships. These appear as subcultures that rearrange commodity forms and retrieve previous cultural artefacts to articulate a cultural identity which is other than the dominant form. In this instance the commodity is used as means of anti-Spectacle. It is turned in on itself. As Willis (1978) suggests,

> Though the whole commodity form provides powerful implications for the manner of its consumption, it by no means enforces them. Commodities can be taken out of context, claimed in a particular way, developed and repossessed to express something deeply and thereby to change somewhat the very feelings which are their product. (Willis 1978: 6)

Whilst the hippies, as modern apostates, renounced material culture, sections of their membership were responsible for the production of certain commodity forms representative of their culture; music being the primary example. In doing so they

espoused a reconfigured space and alternative method of consumer practice. This is latterly considered within a discussion of 1960's rock music in Chapter 6.

The next section considers the production of a postmodern, subcultural identity approached through the theory of *bricolage*. This is important in identifying the interplay of various social and cultural products in the formation of divergent and alternative narratives of self.

3.5 Post-modern *Bricolage*

The post-modern identity is constructed through the selection and arrangement of material commodities which are adapted as meaningful signifiers (Chambers 1987, Hebdige 1988). The idea of *bricolage* is vital to this thesis, underpinning the formation and repetition of subcultural stylization. It also forms a key source of inquiry allowing, 'the re-ordering and recontextualisation of objects to communicate fresh meanings' (Clarke 1976: 177).

The Spectacle uses the creative methods of cultural dissemination in a highly organized, systematic and distilled way, imposing a one-dimensional subjective realm.

> ...the electronic signifiers of cinema, television and video, in recording studios and record players, in fashion and youth styles, in all those sounds, images and diverse histories that are daily mixed, recycled and 'scratched' together on that giant screen which is the contemporary city. (Chambers 1987: 7)

The construction of identity will be shown to recommit the signifiers of style from previous historical epochs. The post-modern identity is accordingly not *sui generis* but entirely dependent on past referents and it is 'the final referent: the black hole of meaninglessness' (Chambers 1987: 5). Barker (2006) claims that contemporary cultural stylizations tend towards a renewal of previous sartorial codes but without any prior knowledge of them. Cultural performance as Jameson (1984) suggests is accordingly vacuous and superficial, a cannibalization of styles which preference pastiche to aesthetic integrity. The transition from a culture of authenticity, as claimed by the American counterculture[2], to a culture of shallowness, tedium and hyperreality is awkward.

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[2] I use this as an 'umbrella' referent

The American counterculture constituted an almost schizophrenic interaction with

multiple strands and signifiers of culture such as the Native American. It evolved using

the popular cultural materials available, consuming,

> ...styles in images, clothes and music in an active meaningful and imaginative
> fashion, one which transforms the meanings of Americanisation and converts
> them into distinct subcultural tastes. (Strinati 1995: 35)

This is the spectacle of subculture, one which despite claims of incorporation serves,

> ...not only as a metaphor for potential anarchy 'out there' but as an actual
> mechanism for semantic disorder; a kind of temporary blockage in the system of
> representation. (Hebdige 1979: 90)

Using his favoured exemplar of countercultural signification, Hebdige argues that Punk

represents a recycled and re-signified language of anger and redistribution of known

semantic types, which operate not merely as a response to a crisis of British decline but a

dramatization of it; alien and known. This is the basis of countercultural formation,

assembled from a variety of sources. This was certainly the case of Punk which,

> ...reproduced the entire sartorial history of post-war working class youth cultures
> in 'cut-up' form, combining elements which had originally belonged to
> completely different epochs...punk style contained distorted reflections of all the
> major postwar subcultures. (Hebdige 1979: 26)

Through a haphazard assembly of borrowed and antagonistic signifiers, countercultural

discourse enabled a conscious and willed dislocation from established forms of social

order. Counterculture served to not only 'upset the wardrobe. It undermined every

relevant discourse' (Hebdige 1979: 108).

The countercultural tactic therefore seeks to consume Spectacle not only to reorder and reconstitute it as a model of resistance and alienation but as an alternative paradigm of signification. The argument accordingly, is that the authentic self occurs as an inversion of the dominant image. The next section examines the repertoires of resistance which situate this antagonism.

3.6 Repertoires of Resistance

Integral to the performance of American counterculture are repertoires of resistance; now considered.

Resistors to established modes of power apply themes of alienation, authenticity, generation and tribalism which as Hall (1996e) argues are relational and conjectural:

> There are many different kinds of metaphor in which our thinking about cultural change takes place. These metaphors themselves change. Those which grip our imagination, and, for a time, govern our thinking about scenarios and possibilities of cultural transformation, give way to new metaphors, which make us think about these difficult questions in new terms. (Hall 1996e: 287)

Hall (1996e) argues that metaphors or repertoires of resistance are not universal and applicable across all times but are specific to particular historical locations and relationships. This does not, however, preclude the potential for the replication of certain repertoires within other milieu. In this instance, the sixties repertoire of resistance is re-emergent when it meets similar social, political and economic characteristics and needs. Furthermore, whilst technology has changed or *improved* the way repertoires are encountered they remain explicitly performative.

Repertoires of resistance to dominant social frameworks are best understood outside the 'traditional categories of class struggle' (Hall 1996e: 294). I use Hall's (1996e) argument that resistance is not a process predicating the inversion of power and reversal of hierarchy; preferring cultural ambivalence and contingency to transcendence as strategy for resistance. This is most readily exemplified within the carnival. Accordingly the

schemata of performance and carnival are used as significant paradigms of resistance and

critiques of power. These inform a cultural discourse not only prolific within the 1960s

but the contemporary milieu.

The next section details in full the theory of carnivalesque, central to the theoretical

approach of the thesis.

3.7 The Carnivalesque

Carnivalesque is used as theoretical model underpinning my approach to countercultural performance. It is used to frame the strategy, aims and objectives of the sixties counterculture.

I interpret carnival as a theatrics of tirade, hyperbole and lunacy harnessed to heal the rift between individual and community caused by hegemonic power. Carnival seeks to redress such divisions attending to the reversal of everyday systems of social organization that inhibit the individual and accentuate an anxiety of separation from community. The carnival unites individuals with collective pageantry, vulgarity and farce. As a 'time out' from the dominant social reality, carnival offers an inversion of hierarchy and the reversal of roles:

> ...the medieval underclass mocked and degraded the official life of nobles and clergy...social class and distinctions were suspended, even that of sex...People wore grotesque masks and costumes with huge bellies, bosoms and buttocks. The theatrics included farcical imitations of childbirth and copulation. (Boje 2001: 8)

Carnival attempts the momentary cessation of social stratification and segregation; the suspension of which allows for unfettered social integration, 'free and familiar contact between people' and an interaction across networks of social actors previously prohibited (Bakhtin 1983: 123):

> Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. (Bakhtin 1981: 7)

The carnival offers a collective performance which resists the established society providing a space where new modes of cultural being, understanding and knowledge prevail. The carnival is a transformative cultural domain where a cast of performed characters not only reduce but substitute the imposition of cultural hegemony with expressions of alternative *free* living. Within the carnival space a polyphony of voices by those without power, are represented and empowered. The oppressed or unrepresented voice is democratized as the carnival dissolves structures of power which sectionalize and marginalize it. In this context the individual accrues greater agency as both author and spectator of the carnival, contributing not only to its consumption also to its production and dissemination (Kristeva 1980). Carnival is only a momentary lapse from the strictures of dominant social roles and class. Nevertheless carnival role-play and role-exchange are, despite being short-lived, powerful indicators of social disparity forcing critical debate.

Social interaction and cultural role-play are the basis of a participatory democracy which in both a cultural and political sense is integral to countercultural praxis. In this context, participatory democracy occurs with the refusal of desublimated states of knowledge or dominant and undemocratic (or manipulated) accounts of history. Participatory democracy is the right of the individual to construct a non-historical identity, explicitly improvised and of willed invention. This allows for clear countercultural spaces where the verisimilitude or hallucination of corporate constructs dissipate and self-oriented, self-resourced subjectivity ferments.

The four themes of Bakhtinian carnival, the tumultuous crowd, an inverted world, the comic mask and grotesque body are examined and shown as models of dissidence facilitating reconfigured frames of reference. In this thesis the tumultuous crowd is treated as countercultural youth. Haight-Ashbury is treated as an inverted world. The comic mask is equated with Hippie, Digger and Yippie whilst the grotesque body is represented by deviant countercultural styles epitomised by the unshaven, long haired hippie male. The notion of frames of reference is an essential aspect of this study and is thoroughly treated in Chapter 5. Not only is this apparent as the strategy of the carnivalesque and counterculture but as a line of inquiry or historiography.

The carnivalesque is used as a theoretical framework, which contextualises the 1960s countercultural sensibility and its constant or at least cyclical reemergence. The 1960s stylization of counterculture is one which embraces the notion of change through expressions of collective being which resist and reconfigure established social frameworks. Carnival *mésalliances* allow for unprecedented social arrangements,

> ...the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the low, the great with the
> insignificant, the wise with the stupid (Bakhtin 1981: 123)

This leads onto a brief discussion of the theory of *détournement* as postulated by Guy Debord and the Situationists. Détournement provides another model much like carnivalesque providing a theoretical framework which locates the theme of cultural renewal that elicits alienation, innovation and contingency.

3.8 *Détournement*

Détournement is a theory which is useful in framing an understanding of the

counterculture and subsequent anti-hegemonic youth cultures as cultures of resistance.

Détournement is most commonly associated with a coterie of revolutionary artists

spearheaded by Guy Debord and known collectively as the Situationists; a small group of

avant-garde, European political and artistic agitators who aspired to grand social and

political transformation[3]. The Situationists idealized a neo-utopia built on the premise of

creativity and free play. They sought the dissolution of the everyday and reconstruction

of the social which was defiantly anti-Spectacular:

> The two fundamental laws of détournement are the loss of importance of each
> détourned autonomous element- which may even go so far as to completely lose
> [sic] its original sense- and at the same time the organization of an other
> meaningful ensemble that confers on each element its new scope and effect.
> (Knabb 2006: 67)

Détournement represents the reversal of established social relationships and a diversion

from established knowledge. The means of *détournement* is much the same as the

carnivalesque. It is a process of demystification and diminution of the Spectacular

through tomfoolery and *billingsgate*[4]. Like carnivalesque, *détournement* undermines

received wisdom and hierarchy through a cultural devaluation which recommends the

revision of accepted cultural knowledge. *Détournement* is a form of parody which

illuminates and denunciates the cultural vacuum of the society of Spectacle. That which

is détourned forms a redirected expression of reality, one critically without spectacle and

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[3] The first Situationist International was formed in 1957 and disbanded in 1972. Its principal members
included alongside Guy Debord, Belgian writer and philosopher Raoul Vaneigem, the Dutch painter
Constant Nieuwenhuys, the Italo-Scottish writer Alexander Trocchi, the English artist Ralph Rumney and
the Scandinavian artist Asger Jorn,
[4] Billingsgate is coarsely abusive or profane language

one explicitly *sui generis*. In this thesis the idea of *détournement* is applied to the San

Francisco Mime Troupe and Diggers of the 1960s, who attained a *détournement* which

they realised as a *free frame of reference*. These are detailed in Chapter 5. The problem

for *détournement* is its intentional ambivalence and celebration of contingency:

> *Détournement*...is the fluid language of anti-ideology. It occurs within a type of
> communication aware of its inability to enshrine any inherent and definitive
> certainity... *Détournement* founds its cause on nothing but its own truth as
> critique at work in the present. (Debord [1967] 1995: 146)

As an anti-ideology, the theory of *détournement* is problematic in that it offers no

sustainable alternative to dominant social frameworks. It is better understood as an

artistic or media strategy as opposed to an actual social paradigm. An example of this is

Adbusters Media Foundation[5] and their use of subvertisements[6] which occur as a

contemporary use of *détournement*. According to Adbusters,

> A well produced 'subvert' mimics the look and feel of the targeted ad, promoting
> the classic 'double-take' as viewers suddenly realize they have been duped.
> Subverts create cognitive dissonance. It cuts through the hype and glitz of our
> mediated reality and, momentarily, reveals a deeper truth within.
> (urbandictionary.com)

Subvertisements are most widely seen as graffiti images, or defaced advertisements. They

are also prolific across 'culture jamming' (see Klein 2000, Lasn 2000) websites and

forums such as those illustrated below. The work of British graffiti artist 'Banksy', and

the current phenomenon of 'Flashmob' offer other examples of detournéd culture or

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[5] The *Adbusters* Media Foundation is 'a global network of artists, activists, writers , pranksters, students, educators and entrepreneurs who want to advance the new social activist movement of the information age' (http://www.adbusters.org/about/adbusters). *Adbusters* magazine is a Vancouver based not-for-profit anti-consumerist magazine well known for spoof-adverts (subvertisements).

[6] Spoofs and parodies of corporate and political advertisements

culture jamming with many of the same ritualistic elements of Bakhtinian carnival and

counterculture.
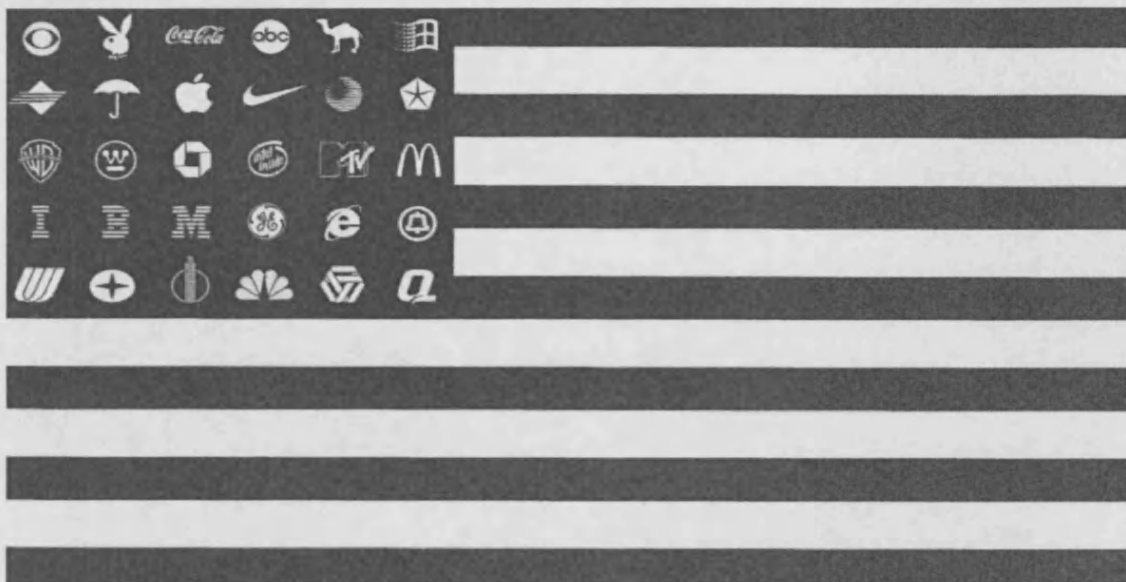
3.1 (*Adbusters* Corporate Flag)

3.2 (Subvertisements)

The subvertisement as a medium of performed resistance is an example of the active and

effective deployment of *détournement* and a dramaturgical critique of the American

mass, consumer society that exploded in the 1960s. The examples above take well known

brand logos such as MacDonald's, BMW, Heineken and DHL and invert them to form a critique of consumer culture. The next section returns to a consideration of carnivalesque and a situation of cyclical resistance.

3.9 A Cycle of Life, Death and Infinity

A major feature of carnivalesque particularly relevant to this thesis is the carnivalesque

paradigm of life and death. The American may be identifiable as representative of the

European reborn. The teenager is the new American, and the counterculture is a new

performative strategy where carnival and performance facilitate cultural rejuvenation

through the death of established histories and knowledge. Death and renewal occur in

carnival as 'the mock crowning and subsequent decrowning of the carnival king'

(Bakhtin 1981: 124). The two processes are inseparable. In the festival a second life of

widened dialogical interaction occurs. This is absent within the dominant realm of

government and corporate power. The revival of the multiple and democratic voice

occurs with the dissolution of the singular hegemonic. Critically however the

carnivalesque is constant and beyond finite. Carnival is,

> ...the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change and renewal. It is hostile to
> all that was immortalized and completed. (Bakhtin 1981: 10)

The carnival is without end and transcends the imposition of chronological historical

delineation. Carnival thus forms a constant cycle of renewal and reinvention which forms

this thesis's supposition of the infinite return of a cultural form. This thesis offers a

cyclical, non-linear approach to history. It argues that the transformative strategy and

remedial qualities of performance are not restricted to an individual lifetime but by the

continued life of collectives and the project of carnival itself. Carnival is thus eternal,

caught in the schema of life and death, rejuvenation, renewal and cultural re-enactment.

Bakhtinian scholar Vice (1997) comments:

The important point about this is that renewal does not occur within the lifetime of an individual carnival subject, but within the body of the people as a whole: birth is always implicit within death. (Vice 1997: 153)

In the face of new forms of Spectacle, carnival re-emerges. Indeed, whilst

Carnival of the Middle Ages calls to mind images of outrageous mocking Medieval buffoonery, the parody of religion and crown, naked bottoms and breasts, mask and costumes...this was also apparent in Woodstock, in the protests in Paris in 1968, and the Vietnam War and civil rights of that era. (Boje 2001: 19)

Carnival eludes the finite bounds of mortality. It supposes instead, not a literal

interpretation of death as end, but as constant renewal.

...carnival understands the human body not as the mortal husk of an individual bound to suffering and articled to end, but as the collective body of the people destined to continue through all change, all history. (Morson & Emerson 1992: 93)

In *Rabelais and His World* (1968) Bakhtin refers to the folktale as being without an end

and with the potential for a multiplicity of new beginnings, where 'the end must contain

the potentialities of the new beginning, just as death leads to a new birth' (Bakhtin 1968:

283). Bakhtin makes use both literally and metaphorically of bodily orifices such as the

mouth, nose and anus, in the carnival setting. These he describes as always open,

whether, eating, drinking, laughing, talking, sneezing or defecating. They are never

closed.

This openness corresponds to a cosmic openness: nothing is fixed in Bakhtin's carnival world, and everything is in a state of becoming. (Elliot 1999: 130)

Carnival dictates a time of its own which lies outside the remit of established order. The

suggestion of carnivalesque, as of this thesis, is that the performance of countercultural

dialogue is unstable and unfixed. It is a series of ongoing events which serve to:

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...challenge all social norms that have ever been or will ever be; they incorporate a spirit of joyful negation of everything completed or to be completed. (Morson & Emerson 1992: 94)

This does not however suggest that there is a stable post-carnival, if there is a post-carnival at all:

...the carnival sense of the world knows no period, and is, in fact, hostile to any sort of conclusive conclusion: all endings are merely new beginnings. (Bakhtin 1981: 165)

The next section discusses carnival as a site for the interplay of multiple strands of cultural discourse and performance, exemplified by the Haight-Ashbury counterculture.

3.10 Polyphony

Carnival operates as a timeless social and cultural resource enacted at any historical juncture. It is used and adapted for the ongoing challenge to established forms of governance and power which Debord (1967) claims enforce a singularity of expression and vision. Carnival confronts cultural resignation and ennui. It informs alternative discourses:

> ...to the narrowly conceived forms of reason of the 'public sphere', as well as to modernism desiring to legislate, in an equally imperial way, single standards for all culture. (Docker 1995: 284)

In doing so it engages with its central tenet, that of an open dialogism. It is this which affords a profusion of 'fully valid consciousness' (Bakhtin 1981: 9). The dialogism of the carnival locates an understanding of the 'inside culture'. Carnival (outside) allows for a polyphony of critique to the established culture (inside), which is otherwise unrealizable. Ultimately it serves as a mechanism which refuses to legitimize the dominant social model. Furthermore it deconstructs the established system and gestures towards other social potentials. This is the process of 'multiply enriching' (Bakhtin 1981: 252). Only through an exterior positioning of self to culture may culture be more fully known. This in turn points towards an eternity of renewal, cultural enrichment and future dialogical interactions.

Within carnival the themes of cultural infinity through renewal, instability, trans-linearity and collective dialogism emerge. These are the fundamental markings of countercultural practice. The Bakhtin sense of self-becoming can be applied to notions of generation,

modernity, post-modernity, cultural improvisation and social recyclability. Carnival is

preoccupied with the severance of the past and the dismissal of historical certitude, which

Bakhtin claims reduces life to a pre-determined and unalterable project. He associates the

past with myth and the oppressive edict of authority. Bakhtin associates this as

excrement, designed to be passed through an ever open anal orifice. A purging (or

detoxification) of dominant histories enables Bakhtin to gesture towards unwritten

futures. He does so through a universal, uncomplicated and ambivalent means; laughter:

> Carnival laughter is the laughter of all the people. Second it is universal in scope;
> it is directed at all and everyone, including the carnival's participants. The entire
> world is seen in this droll respect...It asserts and denies, it buries and revives.
> Such is the laughter of carnival. (Bakhtin 1968: 11-12).

Bakhtin's depiction of the world of Rabelais - the grotesque, simplistic and peasant class,

as conduits for cultural rejuvenation - holds strong parallels with the Diggers discussed in

Chapter 5. Bakhtin uses laughter as the most basic yet universal form of dialogical

interaction and as a means for rearranging cultural perspectives. The action of laughter is

indicative of absurdity and a Rimbaudian derangement of the senses, which predicates a

dialogical liberalism freed from the constraints and duplicity of official cultural

discourse:

> The serious aspects of class culture are official and authoritarian; they are
> combined with violence, prohibitions, limitations, and always contain an element
> of fear and of intimidation...Laughter, on the other hand, overcomes fear, for it
> knows no inhibitions, no limitations. (Bakhtin 1968: 90)

Laughter and dialogical economy signify the chaotic freedom and creative power of the

noble savage and his inversion of linguistic dogmatism into a spontaneous and rhapsodic

means of cultural expression:

> Carnival laughter, then, has a vulgar, 'earthy' quality to it. With its oaths and
> profanities, its abusive language and its mocking words it was profoundly
> ambivalent. Whilst it humiliated and mortified it also revived and renewed.
> (Stallybrass and White [1986] 1997: 293)

'Laughter degrades and materializes' and is the signpost of a dialogic freedom (Bakhtin

1981: 20). This I suggest liberates alternative and subcultural consciousness. It inverts

social surveillance. Focus moves from the public to the ruling elite whose critique points

to new cultural potentials. This type of semiotic strategy appears in Chapter 5 which

deals with the San Francisco *Diggers*, street theatre and the Theatre of Cruelty. For now

it is necessary to detail the theoretical underpinnings of youth as counterculture.

3.11 Situating Youth Counterculture

The focus of this thesis is youth and its performance of alienation from the paternal through subversive behaviours defined as counter or sub-culture. I use the term *counterculture* as distinct from subculture as a reference for the American 1960s hippie movement.

The significance of youth, as a social category, cultural and commodity form, and commercial marketplace epitomising Spectacle, fully emerged in the 1960s with the evolution of the teenager. The taxonomy of youth however is fraught with difficulties; it has no universal classification. Youth is an ambiguous cultural category which may be understood less as an age and more a transitional stage:

> Youth is not so much a biological category overlaid with social consequences as a complex set of shifting cultural classifications marked by difference and diversity. As a cultural construct, the meaning of youth alters across time and space according to who is being addressed and by whom. Youth is a discursive construct...Of particular significance are discourses of style, image, difference and identity. (Barker 2006: 376)

These discourses of style, image, difference and identity are the fundamental avenues of inquiry which inform the production of countercultural subjectivity and space, which I locate as the carnivalesque.

This thesis however, identifies youth as a construct which is more than just a state of transition. Youth articulates a culture of its own which is expressively different to the parental. It performs as a site of transgression and a challenge to established authority (Erikson 1968). It is a cultural niche which accents a distinction between itself as a

cultural group that lies outside of the perimeter of the dominant paternal collectivity. The

example of youth subculture is that of a group exterior to the dominant, normal or

mainstream society (Feuer 1969). This subculture engages with a discourse of cultural

authenticity signifying creative originality. It is the antithesis of *inauthentic* mass-

produced culture.

Youth subculture is seen by Hebdige (1988) as troublesome, deviant, reckless, violent,

negligent and harmful; a threat to the etiquette and stability of existing social maxims.

Clearly this is not applicable to all cohorts of youth. Nonetheless youth is conceived as

through an 'orderly sequence which leads from real events and phenomena to their

representation in the media' (Hebdige [1979] 1997: 130).

Indeed anti-hegemonic subculture is interpreted, criticized and positioned according to

the politicized beliefs and understandings of dominant cultural discourse. Its principal

source of dissemination is the media:

> ...The emergence of a spectacular subculture is invariably accompanied by a
> wave of hysteria in the press. This hysteria is typically ambivalent: it fluctuates
> between dread and fascination, outrage and amusement. Style in particular
> provokes a double response: it is alternately celebrated (in the fashion page) and
> ridiculed or reviled (in those articles which define subcultures as social problems).
> (Hebdige [1979] 1997: 131)

The extended youth subculture is also known through the modern media apparatus, which

provides a record of resistance framed by the vernacular of dominant cultural meaning

(Hall 1977). The media thus returns the anti-Spectacle of counterculture through a

dominant semantics:

As the subculture begins to strike its own eminently marketable pose, as its vocabulary (both visual and verbal) becomes more and more familiar, so the referential context to which it can be most conveniently assigned is made increasingly apparent. (Hebdige [1979] 1997: 131)

3.3 (Time Magazine- 7th July, 1967)
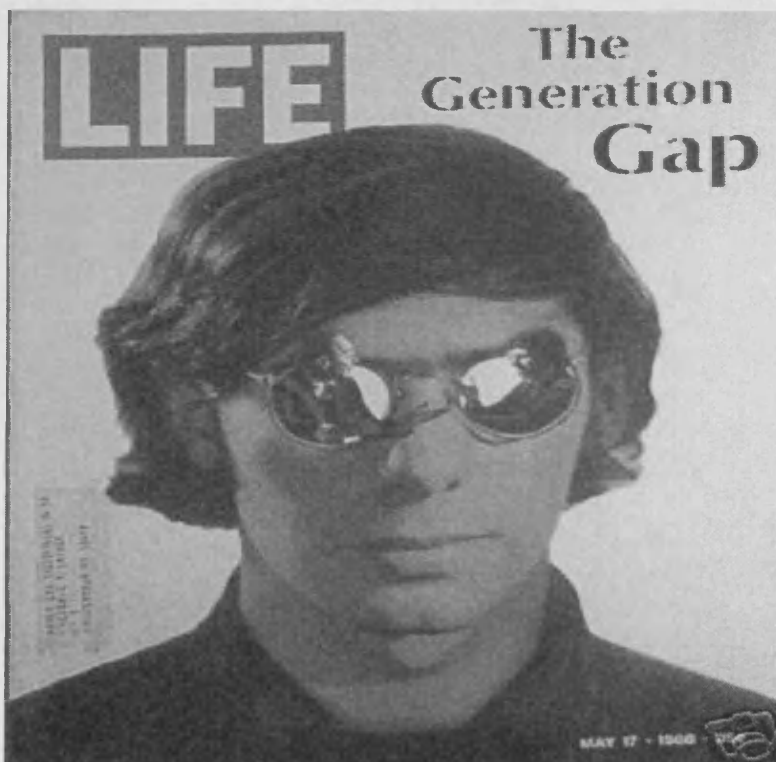
3.4 (Life Magazine- 17th May, 1968)

The covers of *Time* and *Life* magazine demonstrate the transferal of counterculture into a mainstream contextualization, which redefines behaviour and converts subcultural signs into mass produced commodities (Hebdige 1979). I argue that this is why the performance of the counterculture is eternal as it is caught in a constant cycle of stylistic reinvention that resists corporate assimilation. A subculture's only defence against its inevitable commodification is to engage the carnivalesque ambition of renewal:

> Youth cultural styles may begin by issuing symbolic challenges, but they must inevitably end by establishing new sets of conventions; by creating new commodities, new industries or rejuvenating old ones. (Hebdige [1979] 1997: 132)

However the constant production of new countercultural styles and objects of resistance runs the risk of becoming, though inadvertently, another form of capitalism identifiable as *pseudo individuality* (Adorno & Horkheimer 1979):

> The constant pressure to produce new effects (which must conform to the old pattern) serves merely as another rule to increase the power of the conventions...Pseudo individuality is rife: from the standardized jazz improvisation to the exceptional film star whose hair curls over her eye to demonstrate her originality...The defiant reserve or elegant appearance of the individual on show is mass-produced like Yale-locks. (Adorno & Horkheimer 1979: 128, 154)

In his discussion of a culture industry Adorno (1967), somewhat pretentiously, pursued the theme of duplicity and the 'dumbing-down' of musical composition and consumption. He contended that the improvisation of the jazz musician and 'what appears as spontaneity is in fact carefully planned out in advance with machine-like precision' (Adorno 1967: 123). Adorno (1973) further claimed that popular music had become, via mass production, banal and regressive. Adorno (1973) claimed that music was stripped to the most basic of repetitive hooks which allowed for an immediate identification and

increased familiarity. This was particularly the case he argued with popular music where

listeners were encouraged to respond to hooks without ever engaging in the totality of

composition. Adorno (1991) chastised this genus of 'easy listening' for instilling a

soporific, 'regressive listener'. Of course Adorno was distinctly European and a

subscriber to *high-cultural* tastes.

The countercultural trends of 1960's America did much to deflect and reduce the

corporate anatomization of culture into commodified parts. A barometer of their success

is essential in ascertaining the legitimacy and potential of critique situating the production

of cultural identity. The question is whether the ever evolving tactics of countercultural

dramaturgy are viable in contesting what Lasch (1980, 1985) calls a 'culture of

narcissism' and latterly a 'culture of survivalism' and can limit what Tomlinson (1991)

calls a cultural loss affected by the spread of Western modernity.

The next section makes clear the rationale behind the choice of the performative

strategies which inform and structure this thesis.

3.12 Homology: Aspects of Counterculture

This thesis incorporates what Willis (1978) first described as 'homology' to rationalise

the choice of case studies focused upon. Willis (1978) used homology in his evaluation of

motor-bike and hippie cultures, describing the symbolic relationship between life-styles

and value systems, subjective experience and signs each used to disseminate and support

their cultural tenets and ambitions. In *Profane Culture* (1978) Willis demonstrates that it

is erroneous to position subcultures as anarchic. He suggests that subcultures have an

ordered and efficient inter-relational and discursive framework allowing each member to

make sense of their world:

> Having posited itself, shown its existence, manifested an identity in concrete
> worldly items, the social group has a degree of conscious and unconscious
> security...And with this stored and coded image safely locked up within cultural
> items the social group can then, in a reverse dialectical moment, learn from and be
> influenced by its own cultural field and develop its feelings, attitudes and taste in
> relation to perhaps a widening circle of art forms, cultural items and objects.
> (Willis 1978: 4)

Willis (1978) and Hebdige (1979) dismiss the popular myth that disparages subcultural

forms as incoherent and unintelligible. Willis (1978) asserts that the homology of the

hippie, his/her alternative value system, use of hallucinogens and incorporation of acid

rock enables a viable social alternative. The difficulty was that this was not readily

identifiable:

> Despite the extremes and garnishes, though, the style held a certain mystique, an
> inner logic that did not yield itself to the casual observer, or enthusiastic imitation.
> (Willis 1978: 95)

Homology is accordingly used to express a strand of subcultural ontology that affords an

invaluable critique of the mass society. By focusing on the American counterculture of

the 1960s, I examine how the 'hippies created a mode of living with one another which

was carefully pitched and special' (Willis 1978: 99).

This study uses homology as a means of situating the countercultural value system, which

loosely adopted the formulations of the Frankfurt school émigrés and the American

liberal tradition as understood by C. Wright Mills, and the Beat literary movement. These

provide a theoretical basis facilitating an understanding of the orientations of

countercultural practice in the context of the 1960s.

Homology provides an effective medium with which to explore the inner-workings of

culture; one in this instance explicitly American. It demonstrates how these are caught, as

Hebdige (1988) suggests, in an endless cycle of representation:

> American popular culture- Hollywood films, advertising, packaging, clothes and
> music- offers a rich iconography, a set of symbols, objects and artefacts which
> can be assembled and reassembled by different groups in a literally limitless
> number of combinations. (Hebdige 1988: 74)

Willis (1978: 191) further claims that it is 'the continuous play between the group and a

particular item which produces specific styles, meanings, contents and forms of

consciousness'. The particular items of music and drugs form the basis of this

investigation of carnival and the delineation of specific cultural, subcultural or

countercultural types. The next section considers the difficulty of assessing the

counterculture as an historical construct.

3.13 The Imprecision of Historical Determination

Though it is difficult to determine the 1960s counterculture as a precise historical movement it is possible to locate a range of personalities and events within which the countercultural is embedded and carnival ascertainable. These form the empirical basis of this inquiry and occur most prominently in Chapters 4 and 5.

This thesis does not suppose a progressive linearity. It argues that historical cultural discourse is inherently trans-linear, born not from chronological accumulation but an assimilation of diverse and disparate tradition, time and context. In a Foucauldian sense I suggest that cultural history, 'distinguishes, separates, and disperses, that is capable of liberating divergence and marginal elements' (Foucault 1977: 153).

This study appropriates the fragmentary (counter) cultural narratives of the 1960s and argues that these are integral to an understanding of contemporary culture. It does not affect a reconstruction of history which is nostalgic or romanticized; this rhetoric, like that of liberal and conservative, myth and counter-myth, is already abundant (Wolin 1997). The utopianistic and existentialist timbre of sixties cultural discourse is in large part contributive to the extension and rupture of its myth. This thesis attempts to demythologize the sixties counterculture. Emphasis moves away from the all-too-familiar and contested critique of that counterculture as a paradigm of social change. Instead the thesis uses the hippie counterculture as an event and what Maffesoli (1996) calls 'neo-tribe' that enlarges an understanding of contemporary styles of cultural and subcultural performance. My historical position is thus,

> It is the business of historians to try and remove these blindfolds, or at least to lift them slightly or occasionally- and insofar as they do, they can tell contemporary society some things it might benefit from, even if it is reluctant to learn them. (Hobsbawm 2007: 47)

I perceive an intrinsic tension and a multiplicity of roles attributed to historical discourse. History sets and demolishes precedent to social rules, strategy and behaviour. In this instance, the history of cultural performance in the 1960s does indeed set a precedent. In the introduction to the 1995 edition of *The Making of a Counterculture*, Roszak comments,

> Nothing in the text of this book has been changed except for a few typographical errors. Even if it were possible to catch up on the last twenty-five years of history, this is not the sort of study that gains from being updated. One of its principal values is the contemporary perspective it provides. (Roszak 1995: xxxiv)

Clearly, Roszak believes that the method of subcultural enterprise has not changed so significantly as to warrant mass revision. In this vein, this thesis uses the history of counterculture to inform the discussion of contemporary culture. It uses counterculture to convey more clearly the multitude of tensions which divide and confuse subculture from the mainstream.

These tensions occur as transitions - the interchange of public, private, singular, collective, lived and purchased experience - and accordingly *authentic* and *inauthentic* subjectivity. These themes are embedded within a paradigm of cultural repetition. The next section of this chapter considers the counterculture as a type of collective memory.

3.14 Collective Memory

The thesis applies 'collective memory' to address the cultural sociology of the 1960s counterculture. Such collective memory is viewable within the dramaturgical and carnival, literature, theatrical protest, song, festival and media record. Collective memory can be used as a bank of past narrative which continues to exist as an integral contributor in the production of cultural identity and frameworks. It is distinct from history which is exclusively kept as a remembered past. In contrast, 'collective memory is the active past that forms our identities' (Olick & Robbins 1998: 111). It can be:

> ...either organic or dead: We can celebrate even what we did not directly experience, keeping the given past alive for us, or it can be alive only in historical records, so-called graveyards of knowledge (Olick & Robbins 1998: 111)

Cultural memory is thus dependent upon an availability and ease of retrieval. Countercultural memory appears, intentionally or not, and experienced within the literature, theatre and music of its espousal and celebration. These are the accidental facets of its commemoration most frequently appearing as commodities or souvenirs of memory. There is within this historical framework an inherent tension between a cultural memory as 'memory that is shared outside of the avenues of formal historical discourse yet is entangled with cultural products and imbued with cultural meaning' (Sturkin 1997: 32). The obvious example is the Woodstock Festival of 1969. It is known and encountered for the first time for many people as a cultural product, accessed via video cassette, DVD, compact disc or as a pictorial history in Perone's (2005) *Woodstock: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Arts and Music Festival.*

Assman (1992) argues that cultural memory allows the transmission of meanings from the past, which situate explicit historical reference and consciousness. In this way, this study uses collective memory to locate a narrative of the past and determines how this impacts upon the production of a narrative framing the present. It is not necessarily a substitute for history but another means by which history is known. The performative strategies treated within this thesis operate as mnemonics enabling the historian,

> ...to identify ways in which past and present are intertwined without reifying a mystical group mind and without including absolutely everything in the enterprise (Olick & Robbins 1998: 112)

There are, of course, other types of memory, yet these are not quite so helpful in the framing of a translinear discourse of resistance. The cultural products and mechanisms detailed occupy as important an involvement with the present as the past. These performative strategies are shown to be as integral to the contemporary generation of youth as that of the sixties. Furthermore it is argued that the reemergence of specific performance styles are instrumental in reviving other associative collective memories.

Technological innovation and globalisation have had a considerable effect on the production and dissemination of cultural memory. The method of its production and consumption as Le Goff (1992) claims has been revolutionized by technological progress seen as electronic and digital means of recording and transmitting information. The mass media and the internet are the chief examples. These in turn allow for new ways of conceptualizing and interfacing memory and signal the potential for its alteration and falsification.

Though some, such as Callinicos (1990), dispute the thesis of post-modernity, it is my contention that the post-modern epoch is one of daily technological and social expansion and change, commonly associated with existentialism and a loss of subjective meaning or purpose for the cultural agent. In this light, the evocation and application of past historical narrative is used by social actors to frame the present and to facilitate some measure of epistemological stability and reason (Hobsbawm 1972). The fast paced transformation of the social world demands a more reflexive and open-ended commitment in the pursuit of self-formation (Thompson 1995). This thesis claims the existence of a post-post modern self, reliant upon the gathering of previously relegated meta-narratives. It argues that these are now essential in the production of reflexive and critical self understanding and place within the social and cultural grid. Whilst Lyotard (1984) and Fukuyama (1989) positioned the end of history as the end of grand social narratives, I claim that social and cultural actors reclaim history adapting it to their own social and cultural milieu. They thus perform new subjectivities and stimulate the reemergence of meta-narrative.

This thesis claims that the dramaturgical signifiers forming the American sixties counterculture inform important historical narratives that constitute a specific collective memory. The recycling of these historical narratives by contemporary social actors facilitates the emergence of contemporary (sub)cultural trends.

The countercultural artifacts of the 1960s follow a cycle of dissemination, commodification, replication, inauthentication and disappearance. Yet this is countered with adaptation, dissemination and commodification. The application of collective

memory, much like repertoires of resistance, occurs within a cyclical process of emergence and disappearance and follows the same pattern as carnivalesque's death and renewal. This is a process of constant renewal. This forms a cycle of dramaturgical infinity that emerges through collective memory.

One shortcoming for the cultural historian analysing collective memory is the propensity for it to dilute and fade. Halbwach's seminal text *The Collective Memory* (1980) alludes to this, comparing the passing of memory to history to a bereavement, whereby a loved one is consigned to the past. This is a problem of commemoration. Once a monumental form is assigned to history, history becomes static and idle and the need or duty to remember wanes. As Adorno (1967) noted, the association between the words museum and mausoleum is close.

French historian Pierre Nova (1992) argues that this process is even more precarious and unsolvable. Nova (1992) claims that where premodern society engaged with a continuous past, post-modern society separates memory from social production. Accordingly memory is an action of explicit signification devoid of implicit meaning. The collective memory is a collection of signs, a repertoire of representations. Memory thus becomes an autopsy of the past, a point of celebration and contestation of a catalogue of signs. Critically it is a process as opposed to an objective reality. Memory is situational and dependent upon the social institutions which engage with and produce it. Like identity, memory is not a property but a practice and project of self-becoming. Identity and memory are two projects heavily interlinked.

Narratives of collective memory evoke and constitute forms of personal and collective identity:

> Identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves in, the narratives of the past. (Hall in Huyssen 1995: 1)

Hobsbawm (1972) claims that membership of any social collective is dependent upon an active relationship with its past. The community is constituted by its past. Its survival and perpetuation are dependent upon a constant reference to genealogy. Crucially the retelling of historical narrative is what assigns identity. Collective memory thus locates the individual within a community, local and national identity. It also, as Mannheim (1952) claims, asserts the distinction of generation.

Generational difference is imparted in the production of different hierarchies of historical narrative. What may have seemed important to the youth of 1960s America is invariably different from their elders. Thus the parental generation of the 1960s, is set apart by having a distinctive collective memory which locates events of importance different from those attributed to youth (Erikson 1968). What occurs is a different relation to the past. Multiple relational perspectives of history provide the genealogical route of alternative social communities. It is accordingly essential that in order to understand any given cultural tribe one must consider its specific relationship to history. Historiography is thus an essential enterprise in the understanding of identity formation and the situation of the self in society. Furthermore history is a preeminent device allowing for the control and manipulation of national publics:

> The hegemony of modern nation-states and the legitimacy which accrues to the groups and classes that control their apparatuses, are critically constituted by representations of a national past. (Alonso 1993: 126)

Collective memory is a potent means of resistance to dominant forms of history, the latter open to strategic revision and falsification for political purpose. Dominant forms of history are thus those which tend to bypass the historical narratives of those outside its remit. If these become extinct there remains no other narrative to contest the dominant discourse and accordingly no other histories. I now consider counterculture through its genealogy, which is the evolution of its lineage, and counter-memory.

3.15 Genealogy and Counter-Memory

This section makes explicit the historical strategy of this thesis in approaching the sixties counterculture.

For the purposes of this study I draw on Foucault's articulation of a counter-memory, which challenges dominant historical discourses. This provides a redirection of history away from the prevalent accounts to those of marginalized groups. In doing so, this section seeks to recover that which is sidelined or omitted from the main record. By examining a countercultural perspective of history the thesis elicits an alternative viewpoint, one which seeks to secure a more democratic vista, or all encompassing perspective.

This argument follows Foucault's (1977) vision of history which is,

> ...not a Hegelian vision of continuity, progress, reconciliation, and social freedom, but a Nietzschean vision that denies progressive tendencies in history and advocates the proliferation of unreconciled differences, the aesthetic transformation of the self, and a rupture with the trajectories of Western history. (Best 1995: 88)

This thesis locates a cultural history which is neither linear nor progressive nor is it one with a conclusion. The historiography of the 1960s borrows some of the intention of Foucault's genealogy which 'is capable of liberating divergence and marginal elements' (Foucault 1977: 153). Akin to genealogy this study attempts to,

> ...identify the accidents, the minute deviations - or conversely, the complete reversals - the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being do not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but are the exteriority of accidents. (Foucault 1977: 146)

This thesis explores the histories, made apparent through its dramaturgical acts, of a marginalized group, which like genealogy helps to attain different historical memories that challenge and subvert forms of domination. By engaging with the collective memory of the sixties counterculture the thesis constitutes a thematic historiography, which like genealogy is an attempt at 'making visible of what was previously unseen' against 'the tyranny of globalizing discourses' towards 'an insurrection of subjugated knowledges' (Foucault 1980a: 50, 81, 83). Whilst this does not, nor cannot, claim that the sixties counterculture is a totally invisible and absent account of cultural history, it seems somewhat under-acknowledged as an important critical discourse, influencing popular culture and ideology. This thesis, as a countercultural interpretation of history, attempts to locate an intellectualism which like the genealogist, 'contributes to the production of a counterknowledge and political practice that challenges dominant knowledges in the service of normalization by exposing their historical, contingent and modifiable character' (Best 1995: 119).

By decentring the privileged patrons of history, Foucault repositions attention on its more marginal participants and allows for a better understanding of historical discontinuity. In privileging this group and by setting them against established mechanisms of power, Foucault alerts us to the pitfalls and perils of rationality and governmentalization:

> He induces an important skepticism about the achievements of liberalism and democracy by showing that behind the rhetoric of increased freedom lies the mechanisms of detailed control and coercion. He points to ways in which "reason" is violence and "truth" is the concealment of power. (Best 1995: 132)

Foucault however is problematic in that his emphasis on historical discontinuity suggests that history itself is an impediment to the formation of the self. In Foucault's later work he argues for a mandate for 'total innovation' and for constant self re-creation:

> ...the problem is not to recover our 'lost' identity, to free our imprisoned natures...the problem is to move toward something radically Other...we must produce something that doesn't yet exist and about which we cannot know what it will be. (Foucault 1991: 121)

This represents the same difficulty as countercultural ideology[7] which supposes a constant evolution of self yet one which is entirely and exclusively situated in the present. It seems an impossible strategy for the cultural historian. This thesis instead suggests that the process of cultural renewal and the production of the modern self necessarily requires an interaction (unconscious or not) within the network of collective memory and narrative.

There is in conclusion a further problem to the use of counter-memory in that is seen to be protected and sanctified beyond any reasonable appropriation of authenticity (Olick & Robbins 1998). Counter-memory as counter-hegemonic, is also liable to become the dominant counter-narrative. Such claims are somewhat generalized. Not all dominant memory is subjugable, nor is all counter-memory authentic. The two must necessarily be understood in the context of an inseparably intertwined process establishing historical discourse. This chapter closes by examining the types of countercultural artifacts which are most prevalent within a collective memory.

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[7] I use the word ideology in a very loose sense as it is difficult if not impossible to claim a legitimate countercultural ideology.

3.16 The Representation of Collective Memory

The suggestion of this thesis is that memory is best accessed and understood as cultural artifact or as anti-spectacle. This is presented as literature, music, theatre and film. These operate as spaces of cultural memorialisation. Memories are not dead, nor reduced to a singular signifier of the past, immortalized in bronze or stone. Indeed memories can be very much current, à la mode and polysemic. On the cover of the recent fiftieth anniversary of Kerouac's (1957) 'On the Road', its publishers proclaim its continued relevancy and legitimacy as a book which defined a generation. The assumption is that this cultural artifact still resonates weathered themes of isolation, alienation and the search for subjective meaning. This leitmotif of collective memory situates past narratives as vital in attaining contemporary cultural definition.

The areas of cultural expression which are used in the thesis are those attached to artistic expression. These I suggest constitute the principal catalogue or spectrum of cultural artifacts or symbolic representations which interpret and disseminate this period, its members and events. These are the inventory of collective memory. The practice of collective memory is one,

> ...reconstructing the patterns of behaviour, expressive forms and modes of silence into which worldviews and collective sensibilities are translated. The basic elements of this research are representations and images, myths and values recognized or tolerated by groups of the entire society, and which constitute the content of collective psychologies. (Mandrou 1971 in Confino 1997: 1389)

These works of art which connect the contemporary to the past provide a vantage point where the anti-spectacle or *other* is observable and from which new insights of the

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modern world are gleaned. Whilst there is arguably nothing new in this claim the original

contribution of this thesis is its appraisal of the production of such collective memory, as

the dramaturgical. Indeed Confino (1997) claims,

> Many studies of memory are content to describe the representation of the past
> without bothering to explore the transmission, diffusion, and, ultimately, the
> meaning of this representation. (Confino 1997: 1395)

This thesis employs a triangulation of dramaturgical devices as a heuristic locating the

'multiplicity of social times' (Halbwach 1980), which demonstrate the dichotomy of

'vernacular and official memory' (Bodnar 1992). This provides an insight into the

cultural artifact itself, its application in past and contemporary cultural milieu and an

understanding of cultural production.

In addressing the collective memory of counterculture the thesis first provides an account

of official culture which situates public memory that, '...By the latter part of the

twentieth century...remains a product of elite manipulation, symbolic interaction, and

contested discourse' (Bodnar 1992: 20) Secondly it unpacks the unofficial culture

through vernacular memory which is described as,

> ...reality derived from firsthand experience in small-scale communities rather
> than the "imagined" communities of a large nation...normally vernacular
> expressions convey what social reality feels like rather than what it should be like.
> Its very existence threatens the sacred and timeless nature of official expressions.
> (Bodnar 1992: 14)

Critically the vernacular memory is that which has become, through corporatization and

the integration of counterculture into the mainstream, the recycled language of youth,

'derived from the lived or shared experiences of small groups. Unlike official culture

which was grounded in the power of larger, long-lasting institutions' (Bodnar 1992: 247).

3.17 Final Remarks

In summary, this chapter has explained the orientation of this thesis as a historiographical and thematic analysis of specific cultural dramaturgy eliciting collective memory. This is appropriated via the Bakhtinian theory of carnivalesque and the critique of Spectacle. I have considered in sequential order: Spectacle; the commodity; postmodern *bricolage*; repertoires of resistance as carnivalesque and *détournement*; cycles of life and death; polyphony; common cultural language; the situation of youth counterculture; homology; the imprecision of history; collective memory; genealogy and counter memory and the representation of collective memory. These are key theoretical aspects which occur throughout and influence the shape of discussion.

The next chapter provides a discussion of post-war San Francisco bohemia. It begins with a discussion of American prosperity set against cultural dystrophy. This takes in the academic theory of Marcuse and C. Wright Mills. This chapter moves on to consider the Beat literary movement and the formation of the Haight-Ashbury; the principal site of the sixties hippie counterculture. The use of LSD and psychedelic drugs are central to the discussion of the Haight-Ashbury.

Chapter 4
Post-War San Franciscan Bohemia: *Beats & Hippies*

4.1 Chapter Overview

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 set up the methodological and theoretical approach of the thesis. This chapter and Chapter 5 provide the empirical material situating the counterculture.

This chapter provides a discussion of San Francisco as a site of bohemian enterprise. It is divided into two sections. The first section considers the post-war literary coterie of the Beats. These are understood as the starting point of post-war American counterculture and as the first cultural critique of a cult of materialism. I also identify the Beats as not only precursors but the intellectual basis from which the hippie counterculture emerged. Accordingly the Beats are represented as type of bohemian adventure which revisited in the carnival of American post-modern, anti-hegemonic subcultures.

The second section considers the hippie counterculture as a continuation of San Franciscan bohemia. This focuses in on the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco as the epicentre of the hippie subculture. I unpack the theme of psychedelia and the creation of the hippie neo-tribe. This involves a study of a psychedelic drug culture, types of community resources such as 'head-shops' and psychedelic newspapers and sartorial choice. Necessarily this focuses principally on the use of the hallucinogen, LSD. Principal proselytizers Ken Kesey and Timothy Leary and their different methodological frameworks are in turn examined.

This chapter offers an understanding of how anti-hegemonic subcultural performance occurred and developed in the course of mid-twentieth century America and continues to influence the shape of subsequent counter and commercial cultures.

Chapter 4 (and 5) provide(s) a treatment of what I identify as the principal

components of performance for the 1960s American counterculture. These are

discussed as studies in a post- World War II cultural landscape and as reactions

against the mass society. Furthermore, through a process of retro-sampling, these are

presented as a cultural resource, used to create, or indeed manufacture, subsequent

styles of anti-hegemonic countercultural practice.

The rationale behind the choice of these case studies was to demonstrate how local,

post- World War II countercultures such as the Beats and the Hippies, were

transported from a small and localized event into a global and mass popularized

phenomenon.

4.2 Sources

Multiple literary sources were used in the course of both sections of this chapter. I first document those of section one within which there are four distinct literary genres. The first is that of the Beat writers themselves which include: Burroughs (1952, 1953, 1959); Ferlinghetti (1958); Ginsberg (1953); Kerouac (1950, 1958); McClure (1958). The work of female Beat writer Diane di Prima (1969) and memoir of Carolyn Cassady (2007), wife of Beat hero and Merry Prankster associate, Neal Cassady, are also used. Though not belonging to the Beat genre I also attribute to this source, the writings of Norman Mailer (1957) and spiritual guru Alan Watts (1960) as writers with a direct effect upon the consciousness formation of counterculture.

The second literary resource is that of Beat biographers and critics. These include: Campbell (2000); Charters (1973); French (1991); Johnson (1983); McDarrah (1996); Stephenson (1990); Sterrit (1998); Tytell (1991); Weinreich (1987). Gitlin (1987); though not direct commentator also provides valuable insight as an observer of the times.

The third category is that of contemporary histories of the 1960s which discuss the Beats within their remit. Some of these such as Burner (1996); Cavallo (1999); Doyle (2002); Echols (2002); Foster (1992); Guinness (1994) and Braunstein &Doyle (2002) are authoritative academic texts that feature throughout the course of this thesis. Other authoritative histories considering the Beats include, Collins (1994) and a wonderfully damning account in Time magazine by Galbraith (1958).

The fourth source is drawn together from eminent social critiques of the time. I have incorporated Friedman (1963); Miller (1977); Riesman (1955); Roszak (1969, 1972); Shils (1969); Wilson (1955); Whyte (1956) and latterly, Domhoff (1983)

The fifth literary resource is used between both sections of this chapter and constitutes arguably two of the most authoritative and comprehensive histories on the Haight-Ashbury during the sixties. These are Hoskyns (1997) and Perry (1984). The final literary resource for section one is that of histories of California and San Francisco written in and just beyond the time of the hippie counterculture. The two of the most helpful accounts were those by Becker (1971) and Starr (1973)

There is some overlap in the sources used between sections one and two. Nonetheless some others not mentioned require introduction. Two of the most indispensable and authoritative accounts in the discussion of LSD are Lee and Shlain (1992) and Stevens (2000). Similarly the first hand accounts of LSD experimentation provided by Huxley (1927) and Watts (1964) were profitable in gaining a sense of the LSD experience. It was important to get a first hand sense of what the Haight-Ashbury was like and in this instance the memoirs of Haight hippies Gaskin (1990) and Grogan (1990) were invaluable. Similarly any study of Ken Kesey and The Merry Pranksters would be incomplete without reference to Tom Wolfe's (1989) *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*. The work of Blake (1997) and McKay (2000) were also useful in fostering a sense of festivals as the site of cultural experimentation and subcultural dissemination. Finally, though no less importantly, the social critiques of Young (1971) and Foss (1972) situate an unfolding understanding of the counterculture as it started to fold.

In order to contextualise the emergence of the Beats I initially provide an account of post-war America. I discuss 1950s America, its *Age of Affluence*, and the social and political climate which gave rise to countercultural insurgency. I follow on with a portrait of San Francisco as a subcultural zone and site of cultures of resistance.

It seems impossible to extract and autonomize one decade of living without first perusing the chapters which surround it.

> History is not sensibly measured out in decades. The period of upheaval
> we conventionally call *The Sixties* is more appropriately seen within a
> broader setting that stretches from 1942 to 1972. (Rozsak 1995: 1)

Accordingly in order to situate a fully rounded understanding of the 1960s, I retrace history, rewinding to the post-Depression and post-War America. This provides an understanding of the advent of 1960s discourse, identifying the events and actors responsible for its origination.

4.3 An Age of Affluence: 1942-1972

In 1942 America emerged battered yet intact from the devastation wrought by the Great Depression. In the years to follow America found economic relief from the insecurities wrought by the financial desolation that had plagued it (Shils 1969). The transition was vocalised by Roosevelt who announced, 'Dr. New Deal has retired. He has been replaced by Dr. Win the War' (Zinn 2003).

A war-time economy enabled transition to an age of industrialisation and technological supremacy. By the end of the war, America boasted the world's most cutting-edge technological industries of electronics, chemicals, plastics and aerospace and a newly skilled workforce. Insulated from the devastation and carnage of post-war Europe, America was the pre-eminent global power without peer (Cavallo 1999). Much of this was attributed to the successful application of scientific management - the symbiosis of Taylorism and Fordism.

Such was the extent of America's new found wealth that it underwrote the capital vital for the restructuring of European and Japanese economies. The origins of what Roszak (1969) termed the 'counter culture' prevailed during this period, 'An Age of Affluence' which lasted until the American oil crisis of 1972.

This epoch of American life produced a culture buoyed by economic prosperity. Fifties America was a time of abundance and unprecedented standards of living (Collins 1994). This historical chapter was also,

> ...an arena of raucous and challenging moral inquiry the likes of which
> we may never see again. (Roszak 1995: xii)

Arguably, one of the most significant developments of the wartime economy was a new political configuration. The political system was reconfigured according to a military-industrial regime which became the *de facto* basis of American politics (McMahon 1994). Another major development was the 'Cost of Living Adjustment' (COLA) which matched wages with purchasing power (Burner 1996). Pay increments were incorporated into the employment contract, as were paid vacations, overtime incentives and medical and retirement plans (Gitlin 1987).

Mass consumption became a lifestyle archetype for an escalating number of Americans. High salaried jobs enabled a socially mobile and ascendant, careerist culture. As Americans migrated from the cities to the suburbs they accumulated cultural capital through materialist consumption (Cavallo 1999). The performance of wealth was the signifier of success and realisation of the *American Dream*. New avenues of consumerism facilitated new an American individualism made from materialist abundance (Collins 1994).

The next section briefly considers the academic theories of Herbert Marcuse and C. Wright Mills which are useful in contextualising the emergent culture of dissent against, what they termed a 'technocracy' and 'power elite'. Marcuse and Mills were chosen as examples of cultural criticism, as they offer a European and American perspective, respectively. Furthermore their theoretical statements provide a sound framing for the Beat and Hippie subcultures.

4.4 Herbert Marcuse and C. Wright-Mills

Herbert Marcuse was a product of the Frankfurt School where during the 1920s and 1930s he studied with Martin Heidegger and adopted the works of Hegel, Marx, existentialism, phenomenology and German idealism. He represents one of the most prominent émigrés of the Frankfurt School to have critiqued post-war America. Marcuse developed a theory of a technological world. He argued that technological reason invaded everyday life, inhibiting individual creativity and cultural enterprise.

Marcuse claimed that a technological rationality privileged political power and economic productivity above all else:

> Today political power asserts itself through its power over the machine process and over the technical organization of the apparatus. The government of advanced and advancing industrial societies can maintain and secure itself only when it succeeds in mobilizing, organizing, and exploiting the technical, scientific, and mechanical productivity available to industrial civilization. And this productivity as a whole, above and beyond any particular individual or groups interests. (Marcuse 1964: 5)

Marcuse identified a desublimation of culture facilitating technocracy and ensuring the one-dimensionality of culture. He suggested that all forms of cultural enterprise were in effect regulated by government and corporation, creating a standardised, uniform and compliant cultural realm:

> The rebellious music, literature, art are thus easily absorbed and shaped by the market- rendered harmless. In order to come into their own, they would have to abandon their direct appeal, the raw immediacy of their presentation. (Marcuse 1969: 49)

Subculture thus represented a viable means of resistance to what Marcuse (1968: 41) identified as a 'unified, functional language...irreconcilably anti-critical and anti-dialectical'. Subcultural language was aberrant and representative of a dialectical

rationality which championed pleasure and freedom (Marcuse 1955). Subculture was

a means of countering 'an omnipresent system, which swallows up or repulses all

alternatives…[resulting in] a comfortable, smooth reasonable, democratic unfreedom

(Marcuse 1968: 14-19). The recontextualisation of language was a principal means for

challenging this new authoritarianism. Beats and Hippies were prime examples of

this:

> It is a familiar phenomenon that subcultural groups develop their own
> language taking the harmless words of everyday and communication
> out of their context and using them for designating objects or activities
> tabooed by the Establishment. This is the Hippie subculture: 'trip',
> 'grass', 'pot', 'acid' and so on. (Marcuse 1969: 35)

C. Wright-Mills, a member of faculty at Columbia University and Bureau of Applied

Social Science Research, provided a major critique of the American mass society. He

situated an emasculated 'white-collar man':

> Newly created in a harsh time of creation, white-collar man has no
> culture to lean upon except the contents of mass society that has
> shaped him and seeks to manipulate him to its alien ends. (Mills 1951:
> xvi)

Mills (1951: xv) situated white collar life as 'more typically "American" than the

frontier character probably ever was'. He portrayed America 'as a great salesroom, an

enormous file, an incorporated brain, a new universe of management and

manipulation' (Mills 1951: xv). The 'white collar man' was subjugated by what Mills

(1956) called a 'power elite'. This was modern American society; a complex web of

power relations in the hands of a few:

> The power elite is composed of men whose positions enable them to
> transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women they
> are in positions to make decisions having major consequences…they
> are in command of the major hierarchies and organisations of modern
> society. They rule the big corporations. They run the machinery of the
> state and claim its prerogatives. They direct the military establishment.
> They occupy the strategic command posts of the social structure, in

which are now centred the effective means of power and wealth and the celebrity which they enjoy. (Mills [1956] 2000: 3-4)

The Beat and Hippie subculture were prime examples of resistance to such undemocratic and hegemonic power. The theses of Marcuse and Mills are somewhat outmoded and oversimplify the organisational framework of culture and commerce. Nevertheless they are useful in framing a sense of the initial source of Beat and Hippie protest. The next section considers the state of post-war affluence which reflects a culture of repressive tolerance and elite power.

4.5 Post-War Social Flux

Within a post-war era of American prosperity a faction of youth challenged the technocratic equilibrium. Affluence was the fundamental provocation for and framework within which radical disaffiliation emerged. An *Age of Affluence* allowed for and caused this in two ways.

In the first instance, it was very easy for middle-class youth to drop out during such prosperous times (Galbraith 1958). In an age of post-scarcity, middle-class American youth, scaffolded and harnessed by economic plenitude, were able to cavort without fear of destitution. In the second instance, affluent youth rebelled against a culture of materialism which they saw as distracting from very real and apparent social ills, in turn engendering cultural and critical ennui (Shils 1969).

The American suburbs represented Elysian fields of material surplus. White picket fences demarcated each home-owners eighth of an acre, tended by power-mower. Kitchens were stocked with enormous refrigerators and a bounty of domestic appliances for the suburban house-wife (Gitlin 1987). The practice of housewife as homemaker, however led to the rise of feminine dissatisfaction and the proliferation of feminist writing epitomised by Betty Friedman's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963).

Television advertising abetted thriftless spending whilst the credit card allowed instant purchase and deferred payment. The ideal of post-scarcity was accentuated by the American automotive industry's misplaced belief in ever sustainable fuel reserves (Cavallo 1999).

Ideas of disposability challenged dominant cultural traditions. Marriage and family life became as disposable as the plastic wrapping of the dinner tray. Divorce once a luxury of the elite became an acceptable, and significantly, affordable privilege of the middle classes. So too was the age-old generational friction (Burner 1996). Affluence, allowed, the dependent senior citizen, once an established part of the home community, to re-claim independence, through Social Security and Medicare packages. A proliferation of retirement communities relieved families of their care for the elderly (Levitt 1984). The theses of Riesman (1953) and Whyte (1956) further attested to the detrimental side-effects of economic prosperity to the cultural and emotional health of the American family.

As the old were 'bought off', so too was American youth; the children of the Age of Affluence. Celebrated paediatrician Benjamin Spock's (1946) manifesto of permissive child rearing, popularised parental leniency. At the same time pocket money provided the teenager with a distinct identity. Furnished with his / her own room, car and money, the teenager became a target consumer market (Braunstein & Doyle 2002). Teenagers were courted with merchandise such as clothes, records, movies and cosmetics which intensified and consolidated their identity, role and place within the consumer market (Echols 2002).

Idealised narratives of bounteous prosperity, however failed to acknowledge those outside of middle class affluence. Not every American had access to the consumer paradise. There existed across class and racial borders a great divide, or what Roszak (1969) qualified as 'the other America'; inner cities far removed from the idealistic picture-postcard of middle-class suburbia. These were the transient domicile of the

low-skilled unemployable, and aberration to American affluence. A policy of 'urban renewal' or 'negro removal' and the erection of malls and condos attempted to both beautify and sanitise such districts (Domhoff 1983). This further marginalised black America. Street terminology fixed this process as 'Negro Removal'. Such 'pockets of poverty' seeming to impair the image of American affluence:

> Poverty was seen as a stubborn and doomed resistance to the victorious advance of industrial growth that would soon engulf the world. Not everyone got in on the affluence, but everybody believed they could or would, if not by political agitation and reform, then by the logic of inevitable abundance. (Roszak [1972] 1995, p. xx)

The 'age of affluence', is interchangeable with a variant nomenclature, that of the 'age of anxiety'. Whilst the war on communism precipitated a climate of coercion and conspiracy, the psychological agenda of the McCarthy era made the veracity of reported *truth* questionable (Mills 1951, 1956). Dominant public *truth* occurred as the result of propagandist agenda and the iteration of convenient realities (Marcuse 1964). A state of centralised, government and corporate control had featured as the subject matter of earlier European writers such as Kafka (1925, 1926), Huxley (1932) and Orwell (1945, 1949) whose future dystopias of totalitarianism were not too dissimilar from the 'totalitarian democracy' emerging in the USA.

Nonetheless, credit cards and backyard barbeques facilitated a content and acquiescent public and furthered the diminution and objectification of the American male. This was reminiscent of Kafka who claimed:

> The conveyor-belt of life carries you on, no one knows where. One is more of an object, a thing, than a living creature. (Kafka 1963: 83)

The military-industrial complex fashioned paranoia and a climate of fear:

> We were traumatised by what we had been through and by the almost
> unimaginable presence of the bomb, but by the realisation that the
> entire mess was not finished after all: there was now the Cold War to
> face, and its clammy presence oozed into our nights and days. (Tytell
> 1991: 8)

This was an era epitomised by a hesitancy to fall out of line. Few, for instance would

sign petitions advancing the Bill of Rights for fear of many things: losing their jobs,

their security clearance or credit rating (Gitlin 1987). This generation were criticised

by cultural critics such as Whyte (1956), to be devoid of impetus, unprepared and

undesirous of challenging the ruling elite. Born on the outskirts of depression and the

denouement of war, Americans embraced economic and cultural stability and looked

toward a post-scarcity civilization.

The next section considers San Francisco as a site of cultural deviancy. This is the

thesis' location of interest as a site of post-war bohemia.

4.6 San Francisco and a Politics of Deviancy

In the closing acts of the 1950s America entered a cultural renaissance. Cultural rebellion justified in the pursuit of liberty was espoused in the poetry and prose of the Beat Generation and the sound of rock 'n' roll music (Doyle 2002). Central to this libertine ethic was the primacy of the individual and the positioning of the body as the universe core (Perry 1984). This was the exhortation of the Beats, their remonstration against, what Free Speech Movement leader, Mario Savio, polemicized as the 'insidious machine' (Gitlin 1987).

San Francisco as a paradigm of culture was historically out of kilter with mainstream America. It was the unique example of American egalitarianism: ecumenical, lenient and caught in the celebration of cultural diversity (Echols 2002). As a melting pot of cultures, language and ethnicity, San Francisco represented a fertile breeding ground for bohemia and the dissolution of cultural boundaries. It provided an important subcultural space arguably nowhere else quite so viable nor visible.

From its inception, San Francisco was a place for new social beginnings. The speed of its transformation from miniature outpost to booming city is testament to its capacity as a space for cultural rejuvenation. From a population estimated at 1,000 in 1848, it exploded within a five year period to 30,000. San Francisco was a magnet for immigrants from nearly every conceivable nation, Chile, China, Italy, Scotland, Ireland, England, Spain, France, Australia, Russia and Canada (Cavallo 1999). As such, it was a free space for the integration of diverse cultural repertoires.

San Francisco was a cultural mosaic replicating aspects of the world's cities and

housing an enormous cross-section of culture. A tolerant and enthusiastic fostering of

heterogeneous citizenry furthermore distanced San Francisco from the cultural

discrimination evident in other more culturally inhibited and reactionary American

cities such as New York, Boston and Philadelphia (Starr 1973). In San Francisco, the

native-born were as alien to their settlement as the foreign-born compatriots. Without

territorial ownership and prejudice, cultural diversity flourished, and galvanised the

San Franciscan into a liberalised, progressive and truly catholic American:

> The simultaneous settlement of the Bay Area by native-born Americans
> and white foreign nationals compelled the former to be more tolerant than
> they might otherwise have been. (Cavallo 1999: 105)

The geographical site of San Francisco, located on the Western edge of the continent,

secluded and remote from the dense habitations of the East and agrarian communities

of the Great Plains, allowed its citizens to forge a new self-styled version of America

(Starr 1973). As such the San Franciscan philosophy was as distanced, if not divorced,

from the rest of the country as its geographical reference. San Francisco was an oasis,

almost a different country, if not world, where American moral assumptions were not

the consensus but the otherworldly (Becker 1971).

The history of San Francisco was at odds with the assumption of the advance to the

west that envisaged moral elevation with national fortitude, economic potential and

social progress:

> On the moral plane, this marriage between commerce, nationalism and
> Christian rectitude was compromised somewhat by the daring and
> determined sensuality exhibited by San Franciscans throughout the
> twentieth century' and which would appear with insistent Technicolor

transparency and bull horn heightened decibel, in the Haight-Ashbury, one hundred years later. (Cavallo 1999: 104)

Central to the San Franciscan personality was a two-fold appreciation for the sybaritic and sophisticated. The city's early deviant behaviour was not, however, uncommon and was witnessed in many other frontier towns. However, San Francisco was more than just a port for the licentious. Beyond its early beginnings the city demonstrated a proclivity for the sensual and erotic. Indeed San Francisco's insatiability for the sensual was observed not only in a predilection for fine restaurants and wine but prostitution. Many street names were those of prominent madams who managed the vast network of city brothels (Echols 2002)..

Interestingly the majority of San Franciscans were church-going moderates who purportedly took exception to the sensual exploits of a city that had become to be known as the Paris of North America (Cavallo 1999). Nevertheless, the city boasted a saloon for every 96th person, countless brothels and opium dens (Starr 1973).

San Francisco represented a dislocation from America's puritan tradition. By the late nineteenth century, the city had established itself as America's first bohemian enclave. As a bastion of uncensored and burgeoning creativity San Francisco was a drawing card for artistic pioneers, avant-garde painters, novelists, actors and photographers:

> [San Francisco] was the epitome of the Wild West refined by Paris. In San Francisco the American frontier tradition of the self-reliant free spirit combined with Europeans and college-bred Argonauts, with seamen and French sporting girls, with savage criminals from the slums of Sydney and New York, and learned how to read and write and build a city. (Miller 1977: 67)

Imbued with a *culture of civility* San Francisco sustained its bohemian personality into the twentieth century, when in the 1930s the North Beach district became its bohemian headquarters. This *culture of civility* was a unique facet to San Francisco, unobserved in other American cities of the time (Becker 1971).

The next section provides a treatment of the Beat Generation of writers and poets. The Beats form an important stage in the development of the post-war American counterculture, in part, as they offer an example of *bricolage* and the fusion of diverse and often disparate cultural elements, such as Be-Bop and French Existentialism.

4.7 The Great Refusal- The Beats

Accounts such as Wilson's (1955) 'Man in the Grey Flannel Suit' and Riesman's

(1950) 'Lonely Crowd' depicted abundant materialism as the cause of cultural

lobotomy. Challenging this trend were the Beats, a group of writers and artisans who

began a process of disaffiliation, a 'Great Refusal' that culminated with the 1960s

counterculture (Guinness 1994):

> Whilst the blast that announced the new global situation was atomic, a
> much quieter sound exploded the apparent cultural/psychological/political
> cohesion of America's dominant white conformist culture of the 1950s.
> (Goffman & Joy 2004: 227)

The setting was the Six Gallery in San Francisco; the year was 1955, present were a

motley crew of young insurgent and self-marginalised poets with a heady affinity for

excess and inflammatory rhetoric:

> ...My generation destroyed...angry fix...poverty and
> tatters...contemplating jazz...passed through universities...expelled from
> the academies...who cowered in unshaven rooms in underwear, burning
> their money in wastebaskets and listening to the Terror through the wall',
> a revolution had begun. (Ginsberg 1955: 1)

With this epochal denunciation the investiture of the Beats began. Their latter day

descendants, the hippie counterculture who dominated the public imagination of the

late 1960s formed the latter instalment of a culture of resistance.

This coalition originated with the meeting of two Columbia University students, Jack

Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, both with a predilection for the abstract and obtuse:

> Allen told Jack how he would stand in the shadow of the mysterious
> hedges on Graham Avenue and wonder how big space was and where the
> universe ended. Jack told Allen how he would stand in the backyard of his
> parents' house at night when everyone was eating supper and feel that
> everyone was a ghost, eating ghost food. Like Allen, he often looked at
> the stars and pondered the size of the universe. (Miles 1989: 24)

William Burroughs, the elder statesman of drug and literary culture, author of seminal

Beat texts, *Junky* and *Naked Lunch*, completed the initial triumvirate.

The Beat coterie was fused together in 'some pursuit of the heightened moment,

intensity for its own sake, something they apparently find only when they're with

each other' (Johnson 1983: 171). They interpreted and disseminated the vision of the

hipsters' desperation, the vagabond virtues of Bill Cannastra and Herbert Huncke. For

Ginsberg they represented 'the first perception that that we were separate from the

official vision of history and reality' (Foster 1992: 23). The Beat generation critiqued

> ...a matter of living, of awareness, of sensitivity to nature...that single
> miracle ingredient of life that is present when you stand on top of a hill
> and face the sunny sky and you want to scream at the top of your lungs
> how wonderful it is to be alive. The trouble is that most people do not
> have time for such luxuries of the spirit. (McDarrah 1996: 3)

They situated the materialist compulsion of American culture:

> Millions and millions hustling forever for a buck among themselves, the
> mad dream- grabbing, taking, giving, sighing, dying, just so they could be
> buried with those awful cemetery cities beyond Long Island City.
> (Kerouac 1972: 106)

The Beats were a post-war avant-garde, who sought to dismantle the unitary neatness

of authoritative discourse (Sterrit 1998). Theirs was a self-appointed charge of

unmaking and remaking America. For these cultural dissidents middle-class American

conformity represented a trough of cultural stasis. They identified youth as a potent

energy to be experimented with, the politics of corporation and Pentagon a ruse to be

exposed and the moralism and inhibition of sexual inhibition that to be overhauled

(Foster 1992).

The meaning of Beat is multiple. It describes,

> A sort of furtiveness...like we were a generation of furtives. You know, with an inner knowledge there's no use flaunting on that level, the level of the 'public', a kind of beatness- I mean, being right down to it, to ourselves because we all really know where we are...and a weariness with all the forms, all the conventions of the world...It's something like that. So I guess you might say we're a beat generation. (Sterrit 1998: 7)

It is also a descriptive of physical weariness of 'beatness' and of 'being beat':

> Everyone who has lived through a war, any sort of war, knows that beat means not so much weariness, as rawness of the nerves; not so much as being 'filled up to here', as being emptied out. It describes a state of mind from which all essentials have been stripped, leaving it receptive to everything around it, but impatient with trivial obstructions. To be beat is to be at the bottom of your personality, looking up, to be existential in the Kierkegaard, rather than the Jean-Paul Sartre, sense. (Holmes 1997: 14)

Central to the shared identity and philosophy of the Beats is what Burroughs

identified as,

> Shared horror of conformity, social engineering, and the death of spontaneous living' (Sterrit 1998: 23)

Kerouac furthered this definition:

> It never meant juvenile delinquents; it meant characters...subterranean heroes who'd finally turned from the 'freedom' machine of the West and were taking drugs, listening to jazz, having flashes of insight, experiencing the 'derangement of the senses', talking differently to the norm, being impoverished yet celebrating this and prophesying a new format for American culture. (Kerouac 1958: 134)

The Beats were among the first of any group to voice their disenchantment with what

they perceived as the 'dominant material mechanical militarist mammon money

America' (Stephenson 1990: 175). Fuelled with a passionate determination to amend

a system they perceived at best senseless, at worst psychotic, the Beats sought to

implement what Beat luminary, Lucien Carr, attested as a 'New Vision' of art. This

vision emerged from what Holmes viewed as the undervalued foundation of the Beat

sensibility:

> ...world and mind weariness, the continual moulting of consciousness, and the spirit's arduous venting toward its own reconciliations. (Holmes 1997: 15)

The Beats were committed to an inward journey of self discovery of quasi-religious

proportions. Holmes (1997: 18) claimed 'the Beat generation is basically a religious

generation'. The Beat pursuit of self knowledge was overtly anathema to the

simplistic ideals of the suburbanite who the Beats determined as predominantly

materialistic and superficial. Beat literature was an antithetical, divergent voice

lambasting what it saw as America's congenital cultural lethargy (Foster 1992).

Significantly it provided a new critical space within the archipelago of subculture.

The blue-print for Beat activity was a *negative dialectic* – the dissolution of

conventionality, materialism and social regimentation with a libertarian-egalitarian-

populist-anarchist orientation (Stephenson 1990). Their proposal was not political

rebellion but a 'revolt of the soul, a revolution of the spirit'. The Beats 'danced to the

absurdity they saw around them' (Tytell 1991: 41).

Absurdity was a key idea for both Beats and European Existentialists who played a

significant role in post-war literature. Both groups were propelled by factors of

alienation, anxiety, idealism and an intellectual energy. All these themes were in turn adapted by the sixties counterculture into a loose ideology.

Unlike the French existentialists such as Camus (1942, 1947) and Sartre (1938, 1943) the Beats also enacted a positive dialectic which entailed an engagement with sensory and experiential knowledge. The positive dialectic surpassed nihilism and despair, instead communicating affirmation and the promise of renewal (Sterrit 1998). This was latterly the basis of what I identify as the carnival of the sixties counterculture.

The sanity the Beats sought was other than, if not the inverse, of common understanding. Beat madness represented a refuge for those coveting private sanity. Flirtation with drugs, criminality and the pursuit of experiential ecstasy was the Beat route toward self discovery and enlightenment (Tytell 1991). The Beats breached the confines of established taste eliciting their own alienated subjective experiences. They approached and reflected upon the everyday, the taboo and prohibited, the sacred and virtuous, facets of popular culture, film, radio, comic books and pulp magazines, and mythologized them in turn (Campbell 2000). They exploited the rhythms and oscillations of the colloquial and vernacular, exposed the inconclusions and plenitude of image and emotion and penetrated the dialogue of the unconscious mind (French 1991).

The Beats were primarily, responsible for modern and innovative directions in post-war American literature. Such work is endorsed as a distinct literary phenomenon, indigenous to the artistic, political, social and spiritual temperament of mid-century America (Miles 1989)

4.8 Public Perceptions

In the public eye the Beats were many things. The East Coast bohemian community of Greenwich Village, New York and its newspaper *The Village Voice* articulated the prevalent public perception:

> It is a movement of protest. The Beats look at the world we live in, everything that is part of our way of life, including finding out what is holy…They live in a world gone mad and no one cares but them…I think the Beats have achieved popularity in America because they correspond to a very deep sense of unrest in America…They forget that the Beat generation does feel it's better to have vitality than to be dead at the core like the rest of America…They live in a hostile society and they are struggling to find the meaning of life outside of that dead society. (McDarrah et al. 1996: 4)

Literary critics condemned works such as *Howl, On the Road, Junky* and *Naked Lunch* arguing they jeopardised both the literary and cultural order of the fifties. They were deemed as offensive, irreverent and obscene and as transgressing the bounds of decency and taste (Campbell 2000). Critics often lambasted these texts yet failed to situate what Beat actually was. Beat eclecticism which took in such diverse pyrrhic heroes as jazzman Charlie Parker, actor James Dean, poet Dylan Thomas, music styles from bebop to rock, lifestyles from hipsterism to Zen Buddhism, hallucinogenic drugs and method acting, made any outward identity unclear. (Holmes 1952).

The Beats as subcultural champions are important in providing the first post-war polemic of the dominant social values of capitalism and liberal democracy:

> The Beats were regarded as brigands of the underground; they had to find new ways to remind their culture of the dignity of self-reliance and to provide an Emersonian awareness of the tyranny of institutions. (Tytell 1991: 259)

They are also critical components in the development of American anti-hegemonic

subculture.

Media portrayals of the Beats were unrestrained and damning. *Time* and *Life* satirised

the Beats with unfettered censure:

> The bearded, sandaled Beat likes to be with his own kind, to riffle through
> his quarterlies, write crappy poetry, paint crusty pictures and pursue his
> never ending quest for the ultimate in sex and protest. When deterred from
> such pleasures by the goggle-eyed from Squaresville, the beatnik packs
> his pot (marijuana), shorts, and bongo drums, grabs his black hosed pony-
> tailed beatchick and cuts out. (McDarrah et al. 1996: 6)

Time brazenly caricatured Ginsberg as 'the discount-house Whitman of the Beat

generation' whilst unflatteringly Kerouac figured as 'the latrine laureate of

Hobohemia'. Such send-ups were furthered by *Life* (November 1959) who

preferenced the philatelic to the subcultural:

> The improbable rebels of the Beat generation, who not only refuse to
> sample the seeping juices of American plenty and American social
> advances but scrape their feelers in discordant scorn of any and all who
> do. (Life, 1959: 32)

4.1 (Life Magazine 1959- Proclaiming- 'Beats: Sad But Noisy Rebels)

Much as the sixties counterculture would, the Beats abandoned conventional notions

of masculinity, disavowing the roles of breadwinner, husband, and father:

> In the Beats, the two strands of male protest- one directed against the
> white collar work world and the other against the suburbanised family life
> that work was supposed to support- came together into the first all-out
> critique of American consumer culture. The Beat revolt was a masculine
> one, a protest against breadwinner roles for men. Even those Beats that
> spent most of their adult lives as husbands and fathers, as Cassady did,
> never entered the marriage plot, never defined themselves primarily as
> family men. (Ehrenreich 1983: 2)

Nonetheless they remained a decisively patriarchal and sexist institution. What

Carolyn Cassady (2007) referred to as a 'boy's club'.

There are two divergent periods identified with the Beats, an underground cycle 1944-

1956 and a public era 1956-1962 which led to the sixties counterculture (Stephenson

1990). The first is characterised by lassitude, defeatism and despondency. A violent

desperation and confusion is very much prevalent during this time. Lucien Carr,

Gregory Corso and Neal Cassady were incarcerated; Carl Solomon and Allen

Ginsberg were institutionalised. Attempting a mock scene from the William Tell

overture, William Burroughs shot dead his wife Joan, whilst suffering from an

addiction to opiates. At the same time Kerouac and Ferlinghetti lived disparate and

solitary existences (McDarrah et al. 1996).

The secondary phase of the Beats' evolution centres on the beatific. Past such

muttered ramblings of madness the Beats smashed their own ambivalence, arrested

their self-mystification and harnessed their will and orientations 'on the road':

> And he hunched over the wheel and gunned her; he was back in his
> element; everybody could see that. We were all delighted, we all
> realized we were leaving confusion and nonsense behind and performing

our one noble function of the time, move. And we moved. (Kerouac 1950: 67)

The Beats moved towards a cultural and artistic metamorphosis of America. They applied the transformative potential of language and forged a new form of narrative akin to Wordsworth's (1800) summons for 'a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'. Such words assumed a rhythmic, sometimes percussive, explicitly musical tone. Kerouac likened the craft of such writing to the technique of a horn blower:

> Jazz and bop, in a sense of say, a tenor man drawing a breath and blowing a phrase on his saxophone, till he runs out of breath, and when he does, his sentence, his statement's been made...that's how I therefore separate my sentences, as breath separations of the mind. (Kerouac in Weinreich 1987: 9)

This was a struggle to isolate and secure:

> ...a matter of living, of awareness, of sensitivity to nature...that single miracle ingredient of life that is present when you stand on top of a hill and face the sunny sky and you want to scream at the top of your lungs how wonderful it is to be alive. (McDarrah 1996: 3)

The final part of this section on the Beats considers three of the most prominent examples of Beat writing, *Howl*, *Junky* and *On the Road* as seminal works defacing the image of an American Dream and accordingly the mass society.

Ginsberg's *Howl* was an explosion of subcultural sentiment. This was at once a socio-political critique of America and a celebration of the courage and endurance of Carl Solomon, a final paean to the martyrs of the spirit and an affirmation of human love (Miles 1989). Ginsberg exposes the American complex in the form of *Moloch* which

is portrayed as having consistently ignored and suppressed an interaction with the culturally ecstatic, sacred and epiphanous:

> Ginsberg has shown the effects of a society without vision. Commercialism, militarism, sexual repression, technocracy, soulless industrialisation, inhuman life, and the death of the spirit are the consequences of Mental Molloch. (Stephenson 1990: 55-56)

Whilst the content of *Howl* affected shock and mystification the real esotericism was to be found in its style and pace. In many respects the weight of this breakthrough owed more to the construct than the context, yet crucially the affirmation of life over apathy was as integral to the construct as the context. Hence,

> Ginsberg's poetry ranges from ecstatic joy to utter despair, soaring and plunging from one line to the next, confident, paranoid, always seeking ways to retain the ability to feel in numbing times, always insisting on a social vision that stresses transcendence and the need for spirit in the face of a materialistic culture. (Tytell 1991: 20)

The work of other prominent Beats, such as Burroughs, whose *Naked Lunch* (1952) confounded and titillated with its drug-fuelled collage and scrap-book ensemble of an American pariah, demonstrated a style as hallucinatory as its subject. The central character of the 'junky' emerges as a semi-autobiographical depiction of the Beats. The junky is indicative of weak and marginalised America. However, Burroughs comments that the junky's dependency upon narcotics is inherently the same as the citizen's addiction to the capitalist state. The Junky takes *smack*[1] whilst the middle class consume a Huxleyan 'soma':

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[1] Smack: Heroin

> Capitalism is a system of dependency, which run from within to without, from without to within, from above to below, from below to above. All is dependent, all stands in chains. Capitalism is a condition of the soul and of the world. (Mottram 1971: 17)

Similarly *Junky* (1953) is embellished with the pathological imagery of disease and death, paranoia and decay. This is a highly pervasive theme for the Beats, whose work acts as an exhortation against such conformist misery and abjection. Such contempt is explicit especially, in the writings of Diane Di Prima, who protested:

> Not ours the wars, the cruelty, murder, oppression. Not ours the men and women in madhouses, lobotomised, shocked, or drugged to death, terrorised. Not ours the politics of the witch-hunt. Not ours, the women kept home, locked out of sight. (Di Prima 2001: 102)

Kerouac's *On the Road* (1952) considers the degeneration of America's cultural and spiritual soul. Kerouac portrays a search for cultural and moral permanence. *Sal Paradise,* (Kerouac) the narrator sets out to test the American Dream attempting to locate its promise of unconstrained freedom following the example of *Dean Moriarty,* (Cassady) who is the 'Dream's' reality. It stands as a manifesto of a generation in revolt against the ascent of the white-collar worker. Integral to the narrative is *Sal's* desire to recover a masculinity no longer available to the white-collar male, a motif encountered most vividly with his encounters with coloured men. *Sal Paradise* communicates envy for a freedom wrought by immateriality and in doing so point towards one of the key ambitions of the Haight hippie:

> At lilac evening I walked with every muscle aching among the lights of 27th and Welton in the Denver coloured section, wishing I were a Negro, feeling that the best the white-world had to offer was not enough ecstasy for me, not enough life, joy, kicks, darkness, music, not enough night…I wished I were a Denver Mexican, or even a poor overworked Jap,

anything but what I was so drearily, a 'white man' disillusioned. (Kerouac 1952: 180)

Kerouac achieved what The Village Voice heralded as 'A rallying cry for the elusive spirit of rebellion of the times' (Charters 1973: 8). *On the Road* does offer some resolution through the central characters' displacement. Within such displacement an identity is born and this is the efficacy of carnivalesque.

> A national character is projected in Kerouac's singular voice: in the broader context of American literary history Kerouac conjures a Huck Finn image, the raft supplanted by the automobile, the Mississippi River replaced by the open highway. (Weinreich 1987: 148)

The Beats engaged their own self-styled Buddhist quest, a rebuttal of the national obsession of mortgages, money and mediocrity (Ginsberg 1950). As the voluntary destitute they became the antithesis to the fifties consumer culture. The Beats assumed a duality of character, one as outrageous moral perpetrators the other as shamanistic statesmen. Their cultural ambition was however never truly met. What they were looking for was already there:

> ...from New York to Berkeley and San Francisco, Denver, Mexico City, or on special occasions, Tangier. They were hitchhikers upon a landscape already occupied... (Gitlin 1987: 46)

As such their manifesto arguably wanes into a self-indulgent trip to the heart of narcissism. For all the road could possibly provide, the Beats suffered an inelegant demise: Kerouac of the bottle, Cassady of himself, both bound by the system they sought to escape but which ultimately consumed them.

The dissolution of the Beats as a legitimate cultural artefact arrived passively; confounded and enervated by the mass media. Once the media had ensnared the

movement it was reduced and relegated from cultural phenomena to bankable

commodity. Mainstream incorporation was its ultimate demise. The same would be

argued a decade later with the co-option of the 1960's counterculture. Nevertheless

the Beat generation occupies an important cultural space as originators of white,

cultural and political dissidence and forerunners of the 1960s' counterculture.

> The New Left owes more to the Beats than to the radicals of the previous
> generation...[they] may have been rebels without a cause, but theirs was
> the only rebellion around. (Guinness 1994: 95)

The next section turns attention to the second instalment of San Francisco's post war

bohemia and main focus of this study, the Haight-Ashbury counterculture of the

1960s. This focuses on the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco and its situation

as the birthplace of the American, west-coast counterculture. It details and analyses

the various cultural constructs, personalities, institutions, events and performative

strategies that framed the Haight as a neo-utopia. This section considers the

performance of psychedelia as a type of carnivalesque, and the use of LSD in the

production of a rejuvenated cultural consciousness. It pays particular attention to

Timothy Leary and Ken Kesey. Finally, it ends with a discussion of hippie stylisation.

4.9 Haight Ashbury

Distanced from the culture industry hotbeds of New York and Los Angeles, Haight Ashbury was a district of multiple ethnicities, of blue-collar pedigree and of slight significance (Perry 1985). This working class neighbourhood framed by Golden Gate Park, middle class Victorian houses on Ashbury Heights and the black dominated Fillmore district was the site of a cultural phenomenon that captured the gaze of not only America, but the world at large (Hoskyns 1997).

Many staff, students, alumni and 'drop-outs' of San Francisco State College resided in the area. Similarly for many artists, poets and others of a bohemian persuasion, fractionalised and dislocated, the Haight was a sanctuary (Echols 2002). Like many cities in America, San Francisco was home to a host of run-down neighbourhoods. Large houses and low rates of rent attracted a diverse array of residents particularly in later years when the Haight experienced an enormous influx of youth (Braunstein 2002).

Such capacious accommodation was the basis for cooperative living, *crash pads* for America's runaway youth and bohemia (Cavallo 1999). From such unremarkable beginnings the Haight-Ashbury grew into the epicentre of a post-war, American bohemia.

This era often labelled as 'psychedelic' was as multi-layered and ambiguous in its performance as it was in title (Starr 1973). Psychedelia was a business of the mind, and more precisely the expansion of the mind. It was also a project of saturnalia.

Psychedelia pointed to the asymmetry and disjunction of America's youth from its elders. It represented a sequestration from and defiance of the parental. Psychedelia intended to redress the cultural etiolation of the paternal with a Dionysian state of being (Selvin 1995).

San Francisco continued to exist, from the time of the Beats, as an incomparable subcultural space where psychedelia could flourish:

> Things may have been stirring in other American cities, but San Francisco
> was the golden hippietopia that mind-expanded adolescents across the
> nation were fantasizing about. (Hoskyns 1997: 87)

The Haight located the full potentiality of the hippie phenomenon and what Young (1971) called the subterranean values of society: 'hedonism and a disdain for work'. In this tiny fraction of America, 'gentle people with flowers in their hair', a subcultural neo-tribe performed a as 'a whole generation with a new explanation'[2] (McKenzie 1967). The Haight hippie represented what Marcuse identified as 'the free play of human faculties outside the realm of alienated labor...the potential of freedom' (Marcuse 1956: 156).

To one Janis Joplin[3], arriving in the city at the beginning of 1963, San Francisco must have seemed a glorious, utopian scene; a dizzying conglomeration of the affable and deviant. San Franciscans indulged the unconventional, the bohemian enterprises of the alternative community (Foss 1972). This was the city of the Beats, where Ferlinghetti[4]

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[2] Scott McKenzie's 1967 hit song *San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flower in Your Hair)*
[3] Janis Joplin- American blues influenced singer with whiskey smoked voice. Lead singer of San Francisco act 'Big Brother and The Holding Company'.
[4] Lawrence Ferlinghetti- Beat poet and owner of...

had established City Lights[5] and where Kerouac's *Sal Paradise*[6] ended his journey.

San Francisco framed by a backdrop of undulating hills that funnelled down to a bay

of impregnable fog, of uncertainty, of change, of answers 'blowin' in the wind'[7].

Herein was the antidote to technocracy's betrayal of cultural creativity (Perry 1985).

San Francisco evolved through the countercultural wave, into a city boasting a new

voice, the *San Francisco Sound* of acid rock or psychedelia. This sound transformed it

from beatnik colony to a citadel of avant-garde pop (Unterberger 2003). This was,

> ...a place that profoundly and permanently altered the landscape of rock
> 'n' roll and made huge stars out of kids who'd supported each other
> through lean times in folk clubs and coffeehouses from San José to
> Sausalito. (Hoskyns 1997: 15)

Integral to the Haight experience was a mass of dramaturgical strategies. The district

was awash with creativity where poetry, music, street theatre, and *being* were the

fundamentals of the everyday (Goffman 2004).

A performance of self was situated as indispensable to an understanding and

appreciation of those around and a heightened state of consciousness (Grogan 1990).

Through the act of *being* American youth entertained a Dionysian vision, the

concourse of beauty, truth and the joy of fellowship (Echols 2002). The Aquarian

revelation anticipated a revolutionised world; a transmogrified society to overwhelm

the fetters of totalitarian democracy.

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[5] City Lights Bookstore- A completely independent bookstore responsible for the publishing of much
Beat literature, involved in the obscenity trial provoked by the publication of Howl. City Lights
survives today as a bastion of literary independence.
[6] Sal Paradise was the central character of Jack Kerouac's novel 'On the Road', based upon
Beat/Prankster luminary, Neal Cassady
[7] 'Blowin' in the Wind' was a trademark song of Bob Dylan from the album 'The Freewheelin' Bob
Dylan (1963)

The Haight was a unique experimental space for the use of psychedelic drugs (Perry 1985).

> Out here in the perimeter there are no stars. Out here we is stoned immaculate. (Morrison 'An American Prayer' 1978)

Jim Morrison, one with a well publicised penchant for conscious warping, mind expanding drugs, professed, that the route to heavenly entrancement was via the psychedelic highway. The roots of psychedelia lay firmly entrenched in the belief that a lucid introspection and pathway to the inner universe was attainable through psychedelics, principally LSD, 'the orgasm behind the eyes' (Wolfe 1989).

The next section details the use of psychotropic drugs as an instrumental and homologous component contributing towards the formation of psychedelic counterculture. This section demonstrates how anti-hegemonic subculture uses narcotics to stimulate a sense of otherness and detachment from dominant social and cultural practice. I argue however that this is also an inherent part of American society and not something which is exclusively countercultural.

4.10 LSD, Marijuana and the Altered States of America

During the 1960s America was in the midst of a drug endemic that existed prior to and beyond the fringe of psychedelia (Cavallo 1999). American society subscribed to the prescribed consumption of cerebral enhancers and modifiers. A substantial percentage of Americans were legally endorsed drug addicts.

> In 1965, doctors wrote 123 million prescriptions for tranquilizers and 24 million prescriptions for amphetamines. (Farber 2002: 19)

The prescription of *uppers* and *downers* facilitated the everyday activity of the average American citizen. Many however ignored the advice of physicians and abused their medication; some 3,000 fatally over-dosed on prescribed pharmaceuticals in 1965 alone (Farber 2002). Arguably a more ubiquitous and troublesome model of American consumerism was the market for cigarettes and alcohol.

> In 1960, roughly 80 percent of men between eighteen and sixty-four used tobacco...Whether mellowed out on Valium, hyped up on the speed, socially drunk, or gently buzzed on nicotine, Americans in the 1960s had seemingly accepted the intoxicated state as part and parcel of the American way of life. (Farber 2002: 20)

Historical discourse surrounding LSD has failed to mention, if anything at all, the origin, primary application and exposition of the hallucinogen and how America provided a free market for its distribution (Lee & Shlain 1992). It is a misconception that LSD suddenly appeared on the scene of 1960s America, abruptly becoming the lifestyle drug of the counterculture. The drug dimension of the counterculture was not a startling phenomenon but the extension or inheritance of intoxicated lineage (Stevens 2000).

In 1943, whilst working for the pharmaceutical, *Sandoz*, and looking for a cure for the common migraine, Albert Hoffman discovered what would become Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD). The difficulty for *Sandoz* was how to market a hallucinogen. Working on the economic formula of supply stimulating demand *Sandoz* began shipping LSD to America's booming contingent of psychiatrists and clinical psychologists (Stevens 2000). The mental health profession, post-war, assumed a new status as practice was fully legitimated and began attracting substantial funded. In 1946, Congress passed the Mental Health Act, leading to the creation of the *National Institute of Mental Health*. In due course psychiatry and the behavioural sciences attracted increased interest from military and political factions who viewed these disciplines as integral to the maintenance of national security (Farber 2002).

> Between the years 1947 and 1963, CIA and Army scientists examined, tested, and in some cases refined every drug which subsequently became available on the black market during the 1960's, including marijuana, cocaine, heroin, PCP, amyl nitrate, mushrooms, DMT, barbiturates, laughing gas, and speed, among others. (Lee and Shlain 1985: xx)

Of the drugs studied and tested LSD-25 was judged to be the most useful. From 1942 the Office of Strategic Service (OSS), predecessor to the CIA, directed much of its efforts to finding a speech inducing, personality altering drug. As LSD was powerful in small doses, whilst odourless and tasteless, it had major potential as a weapon for national defence. In the wrong hands however, it would become a major threat to homeland security (Farber 2002).

Research stepped up and in 1942 General William Donovan, head of the OSS gathered six pre-eminent scientists to lead a government sponsored, covert research project with the intention of producing a:

> ...substance that could break down the psychological defenses of enemy
> spies and P.O.Ws, thereby causing uninhibited disclosure of classified
> information. Such a drug would also be useful in screening OSS personnel
> in order to identify German sympathizers, double agents and potential
> misfits. (Lee & Shlain 1992: 3)

The then CIA project committee decided in November 1953, that personnel across all departments of the agency would be dosed with LSD, demonstrating the effects of the hallucinogen thus preparing for potential enemy spiking. The program MK-ULTRA launched the same year demonstrated the government's ambitions for the drug.

Initially CIA testing was systematic with field notes collected in controlled environments. This in time was substituted for a more ad-hoc approach that might better prepare agents for enemy administered dosing. Accordingly drinks were randomly spiked and LSD induced trips were performed in a haphazard, sometimes disastrous fashion (Lee and Shlain 1992).

Under MK-ULTRA, LSD was tested on a variety of unwitting participants, often illegally. Operation *Midnight Climax*, was such an example where unsuspecting brothel patrons were lured back to *safehouses* by prostitutes on the CIA payroll and dosed with drinks contaminated with LSD. These *safehouses* in New York, Marin and San Francisco were fitted out with two-way mirrors where the effects of the drug could be monitored and recorded. In these covert laboratories advances in the techniques of sexual blackmail, surveillance technology, and the use of psychomimetic drugs in field operations were made. These experiments continued until 1963 when the LSD research was scraped in favour of the stronger hallucinogen, BZ (Stevens 2000).

Members of military personnel were also used as human guinea pigs, some 1500 troops dosed to measure the amelioration of soldier performance (Lee & Shlain 1985).

There is, furthermore, evidence, though limited due to the destruction of project files, that certain undisclosed world leaders were dosed (Lee and Shlain 1985).

In the meantime, the psychiatric profession flourished with generous federal awards. America was literally awash with clinical trials testing the merit of psychotropic medicines upon the mentally unwell (Farber 2002). In the course of such research individuals such as Ken Kesey, celebrated author of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, leader of the Merry Pranksters and celebrant of the Acid Tests, and Timothy Leary, then a Harvard University Scientist and later psychedelic sage, were *turned* onto the psychedelic properties of the drug (Wolfe 1989). Mass media broadcast that LSD was a breakthrough in the treatment of psychological problems.

Meanwhile Hollywood luminaries such as Cary Grant praised the remedial efficacy of the drug (Cavallo 1999). LSD was greeted as a wonder drug curing misconceptions, extending wisdom and for artisans in California unclogging the mind and facilitating artistic escapade. LSD opened the Huxlian[8] doors of perception where a new glorious techni-coloured world could be realised; where

> If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite. (Blake 1792)

Huxley explained that psychedelics made available a flood of stimulus which the brain normally closed off (Wolfe 1989). For Jerry Garcia, leader of rock group outfit The Grateful Dead, LSD allowed him access to a reality he had 'always thought existed but had never been able to find' (Echols 2002: 23). LSD prised up the gates to the counterculture's Eden (Gaskin 1990). Such was the testimony of other literary figures such as Herman Hesse whose *Steppenwolf* (1927) became prerequisite

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[8] English author and LSD proselytizer wrote an account of his experience of mescaline ingestion called the Doors of Perception. Published in 1954 this short account is deemed to be one of the most profound accounts of experimentation with mind altering substances. The title is taken from William Blake's (1792) 'Marriage of Heaven and Hell'.

reading for every aspirant psychedelic traveller, Alan Watts (1964) and the

aforementioned Aldous Huxley and his *Doors of Perception* (1954).

The next section discusses Timothy Leary as a psychedelic sage / scientist and the

controlled use of LSD. This offers a counter-point to Ken Kesey and the Merry

Pranksters whose use of LSD was entirely haphazard and spontaneous. This section

offers evidence of the antagonistic aspects of counterculture which pervade the thesis.

4.11 The Psychedelic Experience: Timothy Leary and the Politics of Ecstasy

> The goals of this new Ecstatic neo-society are to support, nurture, teach, protect individual freedom and growth. There is one and only function of neo-government in the Post Political Age. To protect individual freedom from threats by individuals or groups who attempt to limit personal freedom. This movement has been made possible by...Mind expanding drugs and mind linking quantum appliances. (Leary 1998: 5)

As a credentialed member of the American Academy and with a Harvard Chair for work conducted in the field of personality testing, Timothy Leary was the publicly authorized voice of LSD, sanctioned to address both the elite and masses (Stevens 2000). He adopted the persona of an LSD prophet. At variance with Kesey, Leary promoted LSD as less a recreational drug and more a psychedelic sacrament (Leary 1964). He believed that LSD served as a psychical apparatus that allowed the individual to test his own reality. This psychedelic as such was a vehicle in the journey of the mind (Hollingshead 1974). Disabling the filters that structured, defined and limited vision, Leary believed that LSD rearranged the 'imprinting process' (Leary 1964). LSD dissolved the permanency and solidity of the observed, liquefying reality, suggesting alternate kaleidoscopic truths. The psychotropic qualities of the drug exposed a Day-Glo, nebulous universe of infinite possibilities and cartoon realities. LSD induced new modes of social production, organisation and creative experiences.

Detroit based rock promoter John Sinclair declared that,

> Acid blasted all the negativism and fear out of our bodies and gave us a vision we needed to go ahead, the rainbow vision which showed us how all people could live together in peace and harmony just as we were beginning to live with each other like that...LSD brought everything into focus for the first time in our mixed up lives. (Sinclair 1972: 22)

Leary claimed that LSD served as a tool for personal illumination and clarification, allowing individuals to redraw if not rediscover themselves. LSD precipitated a

revisualisation of the self, a reinvention of the body and mind, 'better living through chemistry'. Leary proselytized the new drug as the essential means of liberation where the individual might evolve a beautiful, ecstatic state of being (Farber 2002).

Leary and his colleagues researched tirelessly into what method best suited the use of LSD in the pursuit of spiritual growth. All types of esoterica were considered such as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* and the rituals of North American Indians and their use of peyote (Leary 1964). For Leary ritualization was integral to the use of the drug. Scene, space and setting were prerequisites for the consumption of LSD. The controlled environment became protocol (Stevens 2000).

Assuming Leary's less than academic, scientific approach, his employers at Harvard moved to extricate themselves from his psychedelic zealotry. Dismissed from Harvard, Leary set up camp with a group of disciples at Millbrook, a mansion located in upstate New York (Cavallo 1999).

> On this space colony we were attempting to create a new organism and a new dedication to life as art. (www.timothyleary.us)

With an onslaught of media and government admonition, Leary retired from any professional network other than his own, appeared as the apologist for LSD (Lee & Shlain 1992). Although wary of the unsupervised, spiritually disinclined users of the drug such as the Pranksters, Leary stood face to face against the prevailing culture of fear and hysteria surrounding the drug. He ignited the flame with his anthemic if ill-conceived slogan, '*Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out*' (Leary 1965).

What Leary meant and what was inferred was antithetical and confused. Leary's mantra to 'drop out' was interpreted by the press to mean the arrested development of youth through drugs. Leary became his own parody, exaggerating and propelling LSD

beyond any reasonable account. He became the work of his own fictitious broadcast as a 1966 article in *Playboy* magazine, extolling the virtues of LSD and its capacity to produce hundreds of female orgasms from single sexual encounters, suggests (Gitlin 1987). Leary became increasingly dis-enfranchised, as his claims of LSD seemed further remote. The problem for such acid visionaries was what to do once they had attained satori. This book was unwritten. Without such foundations LSD like Leary slid precariously into the sands of the counterculture.

The next section deals with Ken Kesey, The Merry Pranksters and the Acid Tests. This section demonstrates the collectivisation of countercultural celebrities and the application of music, media and drugs in forming an alternative cultural space.

4.12 Ken Kesey and the Politics of Abandon

Kesey's initiation with LSD occurred as part of the aforementioned series of government sanctioned tests conducted by the CIA. Kesey's initial experience led him to proselytize LSD as a vehicle for personal liberation and unimpinging social interaction. Unlike other LSD advocates such as Timothy Leary, Alan Watts and Richard Alpert, Kesey was unconcerned to know of the biological, psychological and neurological properties and implications of the drug. His was a theatrical, fascination (Wolfe 1989). For Kesey, LSD was a mechanism that prompted the carnivalesque and vaudevillian. LSD was a show, a variety concert and opportunity to act; and acting out the multiple personas of one's own existence. Kesey understood LSD as a platform for each individual to try on a new mask, a new identity, releasing facets of personality that the regulatory, surveillance and governance of the conventional world denied (Farber 2002). Impulsive and unstructured public exhibitions, afforded the individual a means to the discovery and dissemination of hidden cultural experience. For Kesey, LSD accessed the psychical spaces of the human character that were potentially immune to social instruction and governance. Accordingly, LSD unshackled the individual from the confines of normal consciousness and social convention. For Kesey LSD was a pathway joining unknown cerebral lands and uncharted social space (Wolfe 1989).

The function and nature of psychedelics was the path of social enlightenment and redemption from established cultural discourse. Kesey claimed that,

> The purpose of psychedelics is to learn the conditioned response of people
> and then to prank them. That's the only way to get people to ask questions,
> and until they ask questions they're going to remain conditioned robots.
> (Lee & Shlain 1992: 121)

Kesey and the Merry Pranksters took LSD not to explore inner space but to re-configure social space. In complete contrast to Leary's practice which promulgated the need for a controlled environment and a prepared space and setting, the Pranksters were devotees of 'freaking' freely (Wolfe 1989). This was a chaotic adventure towards the unknown:

> The Pranksters were indeed a wilder, western, electronic, vastly more raucous version of the Beats- in large part because LSD, destroyer of tidy psychic worlds was their thing...'they were, '...in hot pursuit of the old bohemian vision enlightenment by any means necessary. "Either you're on the bus or off it". (Gitlin 1993: 207)

In 1964, Kesey and the Pranksters embarked upon a 'trip' from the West to East coast of America. In doing so they reversed the historic course of American progress and *Sal Paradise's* journey of self-discovery. 'Further' proclaimed the title of their transport, a bespoke *Hieronymus Bosch* old school bus decorated with strokes of phosphorescent Day-Glo and a tailgate warning: 'Caution: Weird Load' (Wolfe 1989). On board was all manner of electronic gadgetry bombarding the outside world with acid-inspired delirium. At the wheel sat Neal Cassady or 'Sir Speed Limit', Kerouac's inspiration for his *On the Road* character Dean Moriarty, purportedly slicing through the American landscape at breakneck speeds:

> Cassady was driving and barrelling through the burning woods and wrenching the steering wheel this way and that way to his innerwired beat, with a siren wailing and sailing through the rhythm. (Wolfe 1968: 66)

The Prankster escapades formed a re-interpretation and re-composition of the American realm. They sought to align the world with their psychedelic visions. Sobriquets, such as 'Intrepid Traveller', attested the revelation of new subjectivities

and signalled an intent to become the stuff of their own adventures. The Pranksters revelled in their eccentricity and self-imposed displacement from the outside world (Whitmer 1991).

4.2 (*Further* on the road, 196?)

For Kesey, LSD deflected from what he perceived as the stagnant minds of American orthodoxy and reduced the social to a game. The bus *trip* was a means of exploration to a point of liberation and intersection between a rational society and a lysergic wonderland (Wolfe 1989).

It was as though the Pranksters had walked right out of the pages of Kesey's 1962 novel, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*; whose sales financed such expedition. Cast from the same mould as the character of the *Indian Chief* (the narrator of the tale) who not only releases the central protagonist *McMurphy* from his lobotomised institutionalization, but himself from the bounds of the psychiatric institution, the Pranksters sought flight from the outwardly benevolent but privately brutal authority of the state. If the novel's asylum was representative of American cultural ennui and a

state of obedience and violence, then the bus trip of the Pranksters and the fictionalised bus trip of Kesey's inmates[9] was redemption from the circumscription of convention and the explosion of cultural creativity. Freed from American conventionalism the way was made to seem clear and vibrant:

> The Prankster's trip and the acid tests were the genesis of the counterculture. Both were designed to reveal the 'authentic' self that lay beyond the claims of convention, conformity and personality. (Cavallo 1999: 112)

4.3 (Original Acid Test Poster)

Whilst the counterculture arrives from a more diverse and diffuse genealogy than the singular genesis that Cavallo (1999) intimates, it nonetheless situated the realisation of creative being as its core ambition. Though clumsy, haphazard and oft misguided, the LSD *trip*, provided a mazy route for such ambitions. It provided a carnival space where people could come together and experience alternative living (Blake 1997). The Acid Tests were key events in what McKay (2000) refers to as 'experiments in alternative living'.

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[9] Within One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, the character McMurphy leads the inmates on an unsanctioned bus trip outside of the institution, representing the coterie's flight from the oligarchic repression.

Beginning in the Bay Area in 1966, the Acid Tests were multi-media LSD parties

(Hoskyns 1997). They were the antithesis of Leary's carefully constructed acid

experiments. The Acid Tests did not follow any pre-planned format. They were

amorphous and rudderless yet deliberately collective and garishly expressive

(Whitmer 1991). The Tests represented an orgiastic excursion of sensory delight in

which the neo-bohemian enclave of Haight-Ashbury thrived facilitated by costume,

Day-Glo paint, film loops, feedback, and strobe lights (Perry 1985). Within the

lysergic chaos, the convulsion of bodies and minds signified a new cultural expression

and experience (Gaskin 1990). The Acid Tests took on spiritual significance for the

Haight-Ashbury's sybarites (Wolfe 1989).

> The most ardent enthusiasts looked to LSD as something capable, in and
> of itself, of ushering in the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The drug was
> hailed as an elixir of truth, a psychic solvent that could cleanse the heart of
> greed and envy and break the barriers of separateness. (Lee & Shlain 1992:
> 148)

The Tests were an important subcultural space where new collective games and social

methods were pursued. The Pranksters claimed that such improvisational acid laced

activity led to the discovery of new social territories and an archipelago of subcultural

identity (Farber 2002). The Acid Tests were the self-conceived wrecking ball of

established order and a prime exemplar of carnivalesque.

Kesey argued that the geometrics of humanity were often concealed within

undiscovered worlds. Acid allowed the psychic traveller to breach such stratospheres

and claim a new conscious realm. Addressing his fellow Pranksters before the start of

their road trip, Kesey presented his best laid plans:

Here's what I hope will happen on this trip...All of us beginning to do our
own thing, and we're going to keep doing it, right out front, and none of us
are going to deny what other people are doing. If saying bullshit is
somebody's thing, then he says bullshit. If somebody is an ass-kicker, then
that's what he's going to do on this trip, kick asses. He's going to do it
right out front and nobody is going to have anything to get pissed off
about. He can just say, 'I'm sorry I kicked you in the ass, but I'm not sorry
that I'm an ass-kicker...Everybody is going to be what they are, and
whatever they are, there's not going to be anything to apologize about.
What we are we're going to wail with on this whole trip. (Wolfe 1989: 70)

The framework within which this carnival of sorts worked was orchestrated by the

suppliers and buyers, the stage managers of the psychedelic scene. Drug

manufacturer, bible and showroom all combined in lysergic liturgy. These were the

homologous components of carnival which forms the next part of this discussion and

which also intimate the inescapable arrangement of producer and consumer and by

inference capitalist infrastructure.

4.13 Owsley, The Oracle and The Psychedelic Shop: Homologous Components.

The Haight-Ashbury with its Acid Tests, Trips Festival and burgeoning psychedelic rock scene became the principal test arena for the raucous neo-bohemian experiment. In 1967, this psychedelic satellite state was in the midst of its golden age (Perry 1985). Psychedelia represented a revolution of the mind, a Rimbaudian inspired 'derangement of the senses'. It also suggested a prolific consumption of reality warping drugs. The one common chord framing the whole 'freak-out' colony was that of a shared psychedelicised consciousness that eroded social and cultural preconceptions and inhibitions (Hoskyns 1997). Psychedelia was a process of transcendence and spiritual awakening (Selvin 1995). The Haight-Ashbury was a university of spiritual perversity, a monolithic LSD supermarket where the traditional capitalist paradigm of consumer exchange survived.

Nonetheless, the Haight offered a focal point for visionaries to coalesce in the pursuit of *satori*. Across the many Haight *crashpads*, individuals immersed and drenched themselves with acid and the deconstruction of the self and soul. Haight resident of the time Stephen Gaskin reported:

> I started slipping into myself...Then I was looking from over a view of a little creek that was very bright yellow, running down over the rocks. I looked at it, and there were bubbles in it. And suddenly I was one of the bubbles on the creek, running down this little golden river. I bounced around a few times, and then I popped. My bubble popped, and then I was indistinguishably a part of the river. (Farber 2002: 26)

As later leader of *The Farm*, a rural commune, Stephen Gaskin argued that acid provided a better code by which to live. Allen Cohen co-founder and editor of the psychedelic rag the *San Francisco Oracle* upheld this view. Cohen rationalized LSD as:

...the rocket engine of most of the social or creative tendencies that were emerging in the 1960s. It sped up change by opening a direct pathway to the creative and mystical insights that visionaries, artists and saints have sought and experienced and communicated through the ages. (Cohen 1990: xxiv)

The *Oracle* was Haight-Ashbury's 'rainbow newspaper' designed as a trip sheet that

proliferated the ideal of a celestial consciousness as afforded by LSD. The Oracle

published in a hazy, acid stream style was a literary site for the new-age razzmatazz

(Cavallo 1999). Articles considering eastern mysticism, American Indian ritualism,

yoga and astrology sometimes fragranced with perfume articulated the possibilities of

a fully blown mind and the potential for carnivalesque.

4.4 (Cover of San Francisco Oracle)

If the *Oracle* broadcast the possibilities of LSD nirvana and enlightenment it was one

Augustus Owsley Stanley III that manufactured it. Owsley was the great acid business

impresario, known throughout the Haight as:

> ...the unofficial mayor of San Francisco...[who] cultivated an image as a wizard-alchemist whose intentions with LSD were priestly and magical...He was convinced, for example, that the psychic 'vibes' in the

laboratory at the precise moment when the raw ingredients of LSD were being mixed had a strong influence on what kinds of trips people would have. (Lee & Shlain 1992: 146)

Those involved in the business of LSD production considered their employment not only as a means of financial gain but as a grand social project (Farber 2002). Such drug dealers saw themselves as performing a grand gesture, the expansion and advancement of inner consciousness. Grateful Dead manager Rock Scully commented,

> We believed that we were the architects of social change, that our mission was to change the world substantially and what was going on in the Haight was a sort of a laboratory experiment, a microscopic sample of what would happen worldwide. (Lee & Shlain 1992: 147)

One of the principal sites for hippie exchange was Ron and Jay Thelin's *Psychedelic Shop*, the Haight-Ashbury's 'Head Shop' and first of its kind.

> At a time when information about LSD was passed primarily by word of mouth, it served as a place to hang out, gossip and trade drugs. (Lee & Shlain 1992: 148)

In 1965, Ron Thelin, the son of a man who managed a Woolworth's on Haight Street, took Owsley acid for the first time (Farber 2002). In 1966 he opened the *Psychedelic Shop*, one of the primary examples of hip capitalism and hippie entrepreneurship.

> This was an element, of course, vociferously disavowed within the hippy culture itself. Great efforts were made to disguise the role which money played in a whole number of exchanges, including those involving drugs. Selling goods and commodities came too close to 'selling out' for those at the heart of the counterculture to feel comfortable about. (McRobbie [1989] 1997: 197)

Nevertheless the shop serviced the needs of acid-heads, selling all manner of smoking paraphernalia, posters, bells, incense, flutes, books on mysticism, tickets to the Fillmore and provided the first community bulletin board (Cavallo 1999). As an important subcultural space the Psychedelic Shop was imitated in the 1970s in London with the punk boutique *Sex* run by fashion designer Vivienne Westwood, and manager of the Sex Pistols, Malcom McLaren.

4.5 (Psychedelic Shop Poster, 1966 by Rick Griffin. Griffin would go on to design the poster for the Be-In)

In later years with the Oracle, Owsley and shop gone, the dream of non-profiteering, free for all psychedelia disintegrated as drug lords, criminals and hard narcotics eroded the scene.

The final section of this chapter deals with hippie style.

4.14 All Dressed-Up: Hippie Stylisations.

The Haight-Asbury was an overt bric-a-brac ensemble of cultural expression. The counterculture blithely borrowed from scores of different cultures from different times accentuating a freakiness and individualism (Perry 1985). It celebrated opprobrium with wild exhibitionism.

> Edwardian suits and pointy boots; Buddhist robes; pirate shirts and headbands; feathers; silver *conchas*; turquoise and beads; cowboy boots and hats. And that was just the *males*. (Swingrover 2004, p. xviii)

4.6 (Anonymous Hippies, 1966)

Sartorial diversity represented a celebration of multiculturalism at odds with the monochromic uniformity of white middle class America. The counterculture sought to redecorate America, injecting life, colour and drama. This was the preoccupation of youthful carnival, a rebellion and project of rejuvenation.

The counterculture imagined the,

> Enlightenment's libertarian ideals rubbed up against the Romantic's poetic
> drive for deep human contact, experience, and the liberation of the soul,
> giving birth to cultural and political movements based on a desire to bring
> into being a society that [was] both humane and ecstatic' and essentially
> '...right away. (Goffman 2004: 247)

Such liberties were transformed from Enlightenment demands for public discourse

into the emancipation of the individual body. The counterculture sought the

instatement of the body as central to the universe core (Farber 1994). This was the

conquest of autonomy, 'liberty, meaning the absence of physical, mental, emotional,

cultural, and even biological restraint' (Miller 1977: 43). Accordingly, the search for

identity became a mass movement, in turn issuing forth new forms of conformity and

rejigged identities. Accordingly the sixties have never left the public consciousness,

the counterculture, no matter how invisible, has remained ingrained in the fabric of

society; 'the essential energies and ideas of the 1960s didn't die. They just slowed

down' (Goffman 2004: 248).

The counterculture operates on a ripple effect, the initial impact may be located in the

sixties within a small, contained area but with the passing of time, its reach has

furthered. This does not suppose a Hegelian notion of progressive history but of trans-

linear discourses of resistance, carnivalesque and the archipelago of subcultural neo-

tribes. The counterculture transcended concerns of dress, conduct and economics and

in doing so pronounced the death of a material culture:

> ...the whole thing is a world full of rucksack wanderers, Dharma Bums
> refusing to subscribe to the general demand that they consume production
> and therefore have to work for the privilege of consuming, all that crap
> that they don't want ... (Kerouac 1958: 83)

The hippie scene is oft derided for being philosophically gaunt and unclear as to whether it was individualistic, as in 'do your own thing', or clannish, 'everybody to get together' (Gitlin 1987). If there is such a thing as a hippie ideology it was drawn from Eastern mysticism, pastoralism, electric music and synthetic drugs. It was less the exhortative demand of Leary to 'drop out' and 'tune in', and more a Technicolor expression of self. Importantly, the accoutrements of such expression, were neither contemporary nor mainstream but outmoded and behind the times. 'Beautiful people lived on leftovers, the discarded waste of a 'post-scarcity society' (Echols 2002: 21). In a similar fashion hippie homes were furnished with discarded outdated furniture and outmoded appliances (Perry 1985). This represented the beginning of a culture of recycling, sustainability and an ecological consciousness.

> Everybody's house had the old-timey stove and the old-timey refrigerator even though the fuckin' refrigerator was lousy- the light bulb didn't work and it didn't get the beer cold. They had it because it was old-timey.
> (Echols 2002: 22)

Such 'old-timey' qualities were the marque of the hippie neo-tribe. Unwittingly, such trends would later be transformed into mainstream fashion styles evidenced as hippie or *boho* chic. Nonetheless the Haight hippie if only momentarily produced a reality without cause for materialist surfeit:

> The sixties radical opened his eyes to a system pouring its junk over everybody, or nearly everybody, and the problem was to stop just that, to stop being overwhelmed by a mindless, goalless flood which marooned each individual on his little island of commodities. (Gitlin 1993: 9)

This was precisely the *employment* of the Haight-Ashbury hippie.

4.15 Final Remarks

The Beats form an important stage in the development of the post-war American counterculture, in part, as they offer an example of *bricolage* and the fusion of diverse and often disparate cultural elements, such as Be-Bop and French Existentialism. The Beats are important not only as fore-runners to the hippie counterculture, but as a group whose poetry readings, literary exploits and social commentary, redefined cultural expression, in what I would regard, a highly performative way. Much like the hippie counterculture the Beats have suffered a process of cultural distillation, where nothing bar their uncontextualised image remains with these extrapolations used as stimulants for cultural / commercial audiences.

My discussion of the hippies, their use of drugs is important in framing not only how a post-war counterculture functioned (or at least for identifying the pillars of its being), but as a significant paradigm of cultural performance which continues as the prominent mechanism for social interaction used by today's youth.

The breadth of the countercultural personality, its cerebral and spatial geography and overall ambit is too expansive to be considered in one stand alone chapter. Having identified the integral stylisations of the counterculture it is now pertinent to explore its other cultural manifestations. Accordingly the next chapter will consider the personages and events that shaped San Francisco as a transient neo-utopia. Of these, central inquiry will focus upon the Diggers, The Human Be-In, The Summer of Love, Death of the Hippie and the flight from the Haight. Following this I provide an assessment of the Yippie culture of media freaking.

I have chosen the Diggers and Yippies as polar opposites which reflect the theme of 'authenticity'. The Diggers operate as the fulfilment, or albeit ephemeral realisation, of small and local anti-hegemonic counterculture, and the Yippies its media-oriented massification. The Yippies are used as a counterpoint to the Diggers and demonstrate how the local, when exported to national and international prominence, loses its cultural uniqueness. This intimates, in part, the incorporation thesis, yet suggests that the counterculture as a mirror reflection of the mass society, is an important contributor to the complex web of social and cultural interaction.

Chapter 5
Subcultural Performance: *Diggers & Yippies*

5.1 Chapter Overview

Chapter 4 offered a discussion situating San Francisco as a site of post-war bohemia detailing the Beat literary movement and the Hippie counterculture of Haight-Ashbury. This chapter forms the second instalment of empirical material framing the sixties' counterculture.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first provides an account of the Haight-Ashbury Diggers. This considers the application of a *Theatre of Cruelty*, *commedia dell'arte*, and the suspension of disbelief as theatrical paradigms used in the Digger negotiation of everyday life. The Diggers are examined as a facet of the American counterculture which succeeded in inverting a dominant, capitalist based model of social interaction. Of main interest is the Human Be-In of 1967 which stands as a prominent signifier of carnival.

The second section of this chapter deals with the Yippies who represent the popularised, media constructed if not adapted version of the Diggers. This details some of their principal acts of dissidence leading up to the events of Chicago 1968.

I have chosen the Diggers and Yippies as polar opposites which reflect the theme of 'authenticity'. The Diggers operate as the fulfillment, or albeit ephemeral realisation, of small and local anti-hegemonic counterculture, and the Yippies its media-oriented massification. The Yippies are used as a counterpoint to the Diggers and demonstrate how the local, when exported to national and international prominence, loses its cultural uniqueness. This intimates, in part, the incorporation thesis, yet suggests that

the counterculture, as a mirror reflection of the mass society, is an important contributor to the complex web of social and cultural interaction.

Aspects of the American counterculture that were incorporated into its mythology were, whilst heavily mediated, those with the greatest capacity for sensation and commerciality. For this reason the Yippies, as 'good copy', attracted significantly more attention than the Diggers. In a similar vein, the Hippies are arguably better known than the Beats.

Critically however the Beats, Hippies, Diggers and Yippies, as aspects of counterculture are a cultural resource which provides for new forms of *bricolage* and facilitates the cycle of constant cultural reinvention. This of course, ironically, mainly occurs though a capitalist framework.

This case-study provides a reminder of the paradoxes of cultural endeavour, such as the local and global, commercial and cultural, and how anti-hegemonic counterculture is arguably the most explicit portrayal of this.

5.2 Sources

This chapter uses a range of literary sources which I now categorise. I initially detail all those sources used in the production of part one. Some materials are reused in the second part of this chapter and where this is the case I have not made second reference in this initial categorisation. The prime document for the first section was the Digger Papers which is an online collection of all their public broadcasts. This was invaluable in enabling a sense of Digger ideology and their social ambitions. A second category was that of principal histories and personal biographical accounts of the Haight-Ashbury scene that include Hoskyns (1997); Perry (1964); and Didion (1967); Grogan (1990) and Thompson (1967) respectively. The third is that of drama theory and theatre criticism. Central to an understanding of a *Theatre of Cruelty* was Artaud (1938) and Bermel (2001). Similarly Rudlin (1994) was useful guide to the realm of *commedia dell'arte*. Davis (1975) and Orenstein (1999) were also helpful in situating the San Francisco Mime Troupe. In the second section of this chapter Goffman's (1969) seminal text, 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life', facilitated the discussion of cultural performance. The fourth category is that of cultural theorists that include: Park (1951); Stallybrass & White (1986); Stamm (1982) and Street (2003). The post-modernist/structuralist theories of Baudrillard (1989); Debord (1967) and The Situationist International Anthology (2006) were similarly useful in constructing the theme of sui generic identity. The fifth and most extensive category is that of histories of the sixties' counterculture. Those chosen constitute the most authoritative and balanced accounts. They also range from accounts just past the time to the more contemporary. These include: Anderson (1994); Braunstein (2000); Cavallo (1999); Deloria (2002); Doyle (2002); Echols

(2002); Farber (2002); Feigelson (1970); Frank (1997); Gitlin (1980, 1987); Goffman (2004); Graham & Greenfield (1992); Lipsitz (1994); Selvin (1994); Starr (1973); Stevens (2000); and Von Hoffman (1988). In the second half of this chapter a few other literary sources emerge. The first are the self-penned and fascinating if not delirious accounts of Abbie Hoffman (1967, 1968, 1969, 1971) and Jerry Rubin (1970). Sloman's (1998) history of interviews with Hoffman associates and Raskin's (1996) biography were similarly indispensable. Three other sources informed my discussion of guerrilla theatre and performance these being, Howard & Forcade (1972); Malpede (1973) and Schechner (1995). Finally, other authoritative histories framing the Yippies include: Doggett (2007); Kurlansky (2005); Kusch (2004) and Miller (1999).

This chapter considers the transformative capacity of countercultural carnival through the medium of street theatre and theatrical protest. Initially, it considers the Diggers, arguably the closest to a realisation of the hippie ethic and the transmogrified society; their free stores and new frames of social reference. It also details subcultural tribalism as evidenced at the Human Be-In. Secondly it makes an evaluation of Abbie Hoffman, the Yippies and the carnival of 'media freaking' as a counterpoint to the Diggers and an example of how the massification of counterculture causes the dissolution of its cultural uniqueness and value.

5.3 Anomalous Denizens

> ...All responsible citizens are asked to turn in their money. No questions
> will be asked. (The Digger Papers)

In the twilight days of 1966, mimeographs of assorted copy appeared within the Haight,

festooning street lanterns and shop fronts. They were from the pen of a mysterious group

known only as the Diggers. Their messages were a hybrid of the anarchic and absurd.

Leaflets were distributed not just in the Haight but the wider San Franciscan community.

The financial district of the city was itself a target distribution drop (Von Hoffman 1988).

One pamphlet campaign urged a money amnesty where the citizens of San Francisco

were invited to relinquish their money:

> Money Is An Unnecessary Evil...As part of the city's campaign to stem the
>
> causes of violence the San Francisco Diggers announce a thirty day period
>
> beginning now during which all responsible citizens are asked to turn in their
>
> money. No questions will be asked. (The Digger Papers).

Digger solicitation was effective in generating public discussion; albeit one of perplexity

and intrigue. The Diggers however were far more than precocious countercultural

propagandists. They successfully managed to dispel the inertia and privation of a

materialistically orientated cultural dialogue (Foss 1972). Whilst their demands were oft

dislocated and opaque they provided an inimitable articulation of what the hippie

generation was all about.

The Diggers performed a *coup d'état* of cultural politics inverting the dominant processes

which enforced a delineation and distillation of human artistry (Cavallo 1999). As such

they effected a momentary reconfiguration of American cultural topography. They not only espoused performance as the principal means of cultural revolution but philosophically identified the means of individual creativity and thus cultural emancipation via the *life-act* (Feigelson 1970).

In this sense, the Diggers enacted a Rabelaisian paradigm of cultural endeavour. They evoked the spirit of carnivalesque to elicit alternative cultural spaces. They achieved 'temporary liberation from the prevailing truth of the established order…the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions' (Bakhtin 1968: 108).

The Diggers isolated the *life-act* as the primary component in the production of individualism. They argued that individual consciousness occurs through the interplay of varied cultural performances and that subjectivity evolves through the exchange of existing and embryonic cultural forms. These forge new discourses and behavioural paradigms of *life-conduct* (Davis 1975). The theoretical framework of the Diggers begins with the San Francisco Mime Troupe, now discussed.

5.4 The San Francisco Mime Troupe

The Mime Troupe was the brainchild of R. G Davis who argued that radical theatre forced its audience to question primary socio-political suppositions (Davis 1975). Guerrilla theatre exposed and critiqued the cultural stagnation of 1950s American society and prompted the mobilization of the critical-activist (Orenstein 1999). For Davis, radicalised theatre enabled the immediate dissolution of the *old life* through the pseudo-realism of bourgeois theatre. This allowed a transcendent realm where the ritualistic fissure curtailing performer and audience disappeared. Theatre, for Davis was above all, a lived experience whereby the metamorphosis of the stage occurred in symbiosis with an audience causing the interstice between stage and stalls to collapse (Davis 1975).

The Mime Troupe's theatrical strategy was adapted from the theory of Antonin Artaud. Artaud (1938) developed a model of performance which he called a *Theatre of Cruelty*. He argued that audience is empowered as it moves from the privacy and passivity of spectator to full theatrical participation (Artaud 1938). As an integral constituent of performance, audience thus encounters new metaphysical knowledge and experience (Bermel 2001). The interchangeability of audience and performer represented the dissolution of dominant and inhibitive social roles and models of organisation.

Artaud's (1938) notion of cruelty adapts theatre as a violent, vehement medium, able to bulldoze dominant realities. Theatre of cruelty dismantles these and suggests that through the cruelty of disorder and dislocation a renegotiation of reality occurs (Bermel 2001). Through a brutal exposition of unknowns and the vibrant corporeality

of theatre the individual transcends self-set limitations and negotiates previously undiscovered subjectivity.

Artaud (1938) exploited non-verbal, synaesthetic methods to astonish and stupefy his audience. Through the collision of primal image and sound, Artaud hoped to shunt his spectators were from a cultural lassitude and force them to confront challenging even life-altering possibilities. For Artaud, structured and scripted language was the product of dominant ritualism and cultural conservatism which he sought to redefine; eliminating text; the tyrant over meaning (Bermel 2001). Artaud applied kinæsthesis allowing for a more dramatic and instant cultural expression; a pure articulation unfettered by the convolutions of dialogue.

In the midst of what he considered an anhydrous intellectualism Artaud (1938) sought a recovery of authenticity, unmediated physicality and the pain from which life springs:

> The Theatre of Cruelty has been created in order to restore to the theatre a passionate and convulsive conception of life, and it is in this sense of violent rigour and extreme condensation of scenic elements that the cruelty on which it is based must be understood (Artaud 1968: 66)

Whilst the Diggers venerated Artaud's elementary postulations, his hypotheses would nevertheless incur an Americanisation. Much like Artaud, the Diggers sought a rebellion of experience transgressing the confines of the proscenium. They sought a public cultural performance and foray into the street itself (Doyle 2002). Through the premise of the *life-act* the Diggers effectively reconfigured the Haight as a public and cultural space.

> If an American wished to make absolute autonomy the premise of her behaviour, and to break free from the social and moral 'roles' into which she had been 'cast' by fate or by others, all she needed to do was 'act' that way in 'real' life. (Cavallo 1999: 120)

The Mime Troupe also attributed its theatrical technique to the 16th century Italian, commedia dell 'arte. Similar to Artaudian methodology, commedia dell 'arte posited the efficacy of silent communication disseminating the shocking, depraved and politically incorrect (Rudlin 1994). The moving body itself, exemplified the most profound and lyrical exponent of expression. From the lubricious and gracious to the vulgar and coarse, the physicality of torso and face were harnessed by practitioners, who exploiting the contours of the body, divulged multiple narratives (Rudlin 1994). *Commedia dell 'arte* was the prime exponent of this premise, utilising the body to maximum effect; serving not to inspire but to choke its audience.

Mime, physical theatre and improvisation are unpredictable and unstructured cultural expressions where reality is amorphous and unfixed. Whilst words sharpen, define, homogenise and restrict, the body, opens up new cultural spaces (Rudlin 1994). The body provides a frame of reference not indisputable and permanent but malleable and variable. From this frame of reference others are imagined, encountered and enacted. Theatrical performance therefore allows for a plurality of cultural expression and interpretation facilitating reconfigured cultural subjectivities. Street (2003) suggests that this type of performance:

> ...provides a space in which acts of resistance can be
> articulated...[where subcultures make] sense of their marginal status
> by appropriating and re-interpreting popular culture. (Street 2003: 121)

The effect of this performance was potentially unsettling elucidating discomfiting and difficult truths. The Mime Troupe capitalised on this affecting a cruel but vital dissemination of cultural politics. (Von Hoffman 1988). This was the adaptation of Artaud's theatre of cruelty in full flow.

The Mime Troupe, like the Diggers, lampooned dominant social and cultural frameworks and denigrated the established systems of power with impunity (Perry 1985). The Troupe was the epitome of carnivalesque. Whilst risqué, anti-establishment tones characterised the Mime Troupe and latter day Diggers, what differentiated them from other countercultural groups of the time was their central positioning of performance as a tool of social protest (Doyle 2002). For the Mime Troup and Diggers, theatre was the most cogent medium in the defence of American liberty and the formation of individual identity (Farber 2002).

The underlying tenet of the American notion of freedom was the unassailable right of the individual in constructing, altering and refashioning his identity (Cavallo 1999). Within the *life-act* individual identity was malleable, born of a permutable, vacillating personality. Countercultural subjectivity was the product of *life-performance* where events and personages could stimulate moods of consciousness and affect different styles of being (Davis 1975). The Diggers considered that the method for the production of individualistic identity lay within improvisation and artistic self-creation. The Diggers argued that linear history, like a life-script, was detrimental to the pursuit of self-actualization. Identity, for them, was forged not through historical assignation but spontaneous and impulsive theatrical performance (Orenstein 1999).

In the Digger's theoretical framework, identity resulted from a tripartite process of presentation (staging), of invention (role) to the public (audience) and was easily restaged and reset (Orenstein 1999). Staging and role altered according to the *life-actor* as autonomous director of his own *life-play*. Herein lay the potential for the excavation of a pre-social American personality. This theme was pervasive within the grand American myths that appropriated personal identity as less the fixed implication of family and personal history and more the premise of willed invention (Cavallo 1999). This was akin to Baudrillard's notion of America as modernity:

> America is the original version of modernity...America ducks the
> question of origins; it cultivates no origin or mythical authenticity; it
> has no past no founding truth. (Baudrillard 1989: 76)

The Diggers however pointed towards a post-modernity where improvisation was the principal means of self-invention. For the Diggers, the Haight-Ashbury offered the exact stage for such performance. In Digger eyes the Haight was a cultural circus where theatrical devices were not constrictive, where scripts capitulated and American life assumed an improvisational quality. Perhaps the only abiding facet of cultural development was the entitlement of the individual for self-innovation (Doyle 2002).

Integral to the Digger ethic was the privileging of freedom and autonomy as indisputable goals. As they extricated themselves from the imposition of hegemonic power and the cult of security the Diggers harnessed a new self-knowledge and self-revelation. They attested that through *acting-out* American youth would learn to do their own thing, explore and discover their own realities and defend themselves from the censorious envelopment of technocracy (Lipsitz 1994).

The next section provides a full treatment of the Diggers and their manifesto. This is perhaps the closest to a fulfilment of what the hippie counterculture ostensibly aspired to be. The Diggers provide much in the same way as the Beats did to the Hippies a substantive grounding from which other countercultural styles evolved. This section situates the Diggers as a local manifestation of anti-hegemonic counterculture, distinct from the global stature (or infamy) of the Yippies.

5.5 The Digger Manifesto

The Diggers took their name from a group of English millenarians who with the end

of the English Civil War opposed the enclosure of common land. These agrarian

radicals sought a cooperative sodality, where personal ownership was supplanted by a

collective sharing of assets. The San Francisco Diggers reengaged this ambition. They

were in similarly small and short-lived numbers challengers to the dominant social

and economic construct (Braunstein 2002).

Fusing an outlaw comportment with the satirical corrosiveness of *commedia dell'arte*,

the Diggers transported Davis's guerrilla theatre from the proscenium to the street and

in doing so collapsed the boundaries between art and life, audience and actor, private

and public (Doyle 2002).The Diggers sought the instatement of a utopian, egalitarian

programme and the realisation of an alternative 'free' society. In the Digger taxonomy

'free' was as much an imperative as an adjective. The Digger appeal was a

fomentation for a *free city* populated by *free families* (Foss 1972).

> Our state of awareness demands that we uplift our efforts from competitive
> game playing in the underground to the comparative roles of *free families*
> in *free cities*... (The Digger Papers)

The broad ambit of the Free City consisted of,

> Free Families (e.g., in San Francisco: Diggers, Black Panthers, Provos,
> Mission Rebels and various revolutionist gangs and communes) who
> establish and maintain services that provide a base of freedom for
> autonomous groups to carry out their programs without having to hassle
> for food, printing facilities, transportation, mechanics, money, housing,
> working space, clothes, machines, trucks, etc. (The Digger Papers)

The potential for a free society however relied upon a communalistic contract of co-dependency. The familial contract was vastly widened to include the greater community as extended family (Gitlin 1987) Capitalist exchange was abandoned for communalistic collaboration. An *Age of Affluence* pointed towards an *Age of Altruism*.

The Diggers in some respects prefigured the Situationists, spearheaded by Guy Debord. The Situationists' theory of *détournement* as a paradigm of devaluation (or the dissolution of an historical past) was much the same as the Diggers own outlook:

> The Situationists consider cultural activity in its totality as an experimental method for constructing everyday life, a method can and should be continually developed with the extension of leisure and the withering away of the division of labour. (S.I 2006: 55)

Social commentators forecast that the abundant society would preclude the need for human labour (Graham & Greenfield 1992). The poet and Digger sympathiser Richard Brautigan, in his ode *All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace*, envisaged the prospect of such leisured symbiosis,

> I like to think
> (it has to be!)
> of a cybernetic ecology
> where we are free of our labors
> and joined back to nature,
> returned to our mammal
> brothers and sisters,
> and all watched over
> by machines of loving grace. (Brautigan 1968)

Brautigan's writing depicts the quintessential post-modern American Eden, and the tension between the mythic American weald and a technological hinterland. Yet

within Brautigan's cybernetic-forest, a fusion of the natural and computerized occurs

as a mechanized-ecological paradise. From this line of argument the Diggers argued

that money would become irrelevant. They organised a street pageant to celebrate the

'death of money'. Dollar bills and coinage were placed in a coffin whilst whistles,

incense and flowers were distributed among participants and onlookers:

> Three hooded figures carried a silver dollar sign on a stick. A black-clad modern Diogenes carrying a kerosene lamp preceded a black-draped coffin borne by six Egyptianesque animal masks. Other Mime Troupers...all made up like cripples and dwarves from the Middle Ages- walked down the sidewalks in two groups on either side of the street. (Perry 1964: 108-115)

The Digger free project began in October 1966 with daily feeds in the Panhandle area

of Golden Gate Park. From such beginnings the Diggers opened a *free store* where

'customers' were encouraged to help themselves to whatever and however much they

wanted (Hoskyns 1997). There was only one rule to the free store, advertised on a

sign adjacent to a box of money, 'Free Money', it was 'No Stealing' (Perry 1964). The

free store, known as the 'Free Frame of Reference', stocked clothing, furniture and an

assortment of bric-a-brac. The store parodied capitalist exchange whilst re-circulating

the amplitude of American opulence. The Diggers behaved like early recycling

pioneers and in doing so exposed the profligacy of the affluent society.

Another of the Digger stores, 'The Trip Without A Ticket' (arguably the most

renowned) run by the Digger Peter Berg, was used as an interactive art installation

(Grogan 1990). Berg used the store for the realignment of subjective frames of

reference. The store was more a liminal space for the enactment of diverse social and

cultural expression than a site for the exchange of goods. The role of customer was

easily interchangeable with that of manager. Capitalist hierarchy was effectively

shattered. Any one person could assume any given role at any given time. In one

instance a shopper asking to address someone in charge was told that they themselves

were (Perry 1985). Social roles and dominant paradigms of social organisation were

made to be entirely ambiguous, unfixed and emphatically *free*. The Diggers

demonstrated the potential for unrestricted social enactment and dialogical invention:

> Diggers assume free stores to liberate human nature. First free the space,
> goods and services. Let theories of economics follow social facts. Once a
> free store is assumed, human wanting and giving, needing and taking,
> become wide open to improvisation. A sign: *If Someone Asks to See the
> Manager Tell Him He's the Manager*. Someone asked how much a book
> cost. How much did he think it was worth? 75 cents. The money was taken
> and held out for anyone. "Who wants 75 cents?" A girl who had just
> walked in came over and took it. A basket labeled *Free Money*. No owner,
> no Manager, no employees and no cash-register. A salesman in a free store
> is a life-actor. Anyone who will assume an answer to a question or accept
> a problem as a turn-on. (The Digger Papers)

5.1 (A Digger Free Market, Haight Ashbury, 1967)

Community co-operation and responsibility were key to the Digger's vision of freedom. The Diggers sought to resurrect the social framework of community and neighbourhood which the modern city had displaced. As Park (1951) suggested,

> In the city environment the neighbourhood tends to lose much of the significance which it possessed in simpler...forms of society. On the other hand, the isolation of the immigrant and racial colonies of the so-called ghettoes and areas of population segregation tend to preserve and...to intensify the intimacies of the local and neighbourhood groups. (Park [1951] 1997: 17)

The Diggers were integral in the formation of the hippie neighbourhood and consequently the Haight-Ashbury subjectivity. The Haight was a ghetto of countercultural belonging.

The Diggers were critical of those who substituted or thwarted the pursuit of freedom with other strategies or demands. Diggers were openly critical of the hippies and the New Left, who in their estimation, bypassed the route to American freedom (Goffman 2004). They considered the New Left to be consumed by the same,

> ...puritanical shit as the country's right wing was cowardly absurd'; the psychedelic waterfall promulgated by Timothy Leary as 'tune-in, turn-on, drop-out jerk off ideology' the pretentious 'bullshit implicit in the psychedelic transcendentalism. (Grogan 1990: 238)

The Diggers detested the counterfeit copy of groups such as the New Left who posed with the overtly masculine swagger and ideological chain-mail of the grand historical revolutionaries of Mao and Che Guevera (Doyle 2002). The next section provides a discussion of other acts of Digger carnival.

5.6 Free Frames of Reference

The Diggers built a 'Free Frame of Reference', a massive 12 foot square wooden

frame painted in a bright yellow; a portal through which people passed to claim their

free, daily stew in the Panhandle. The frame was intended to alter conceptual

paradigms, thus rejuvenating and reconfiguring personal realities (Perry 1985).

In the many street happenings that occurred throughout the autumn of 1966, miniature

frames were distributed to be worn around the neck allowing for a new reality through

a new frame of reference. Street events were staged every few weeks. On one such

occasion the Diggers gathered on the southwest corner of the intersection between

Haight and Ashbury streets, in what was considered the emblematic nucleus of the

community, a 'psychedelphia', installing their monumental Frame of Reference

(Hoskyns 1997).

Two gargantuan puppets performed a skit entitled, 'Any Fool on the Street'. Weaving

through the frame they debated which side was 'inside' and which side was 'outside'.

Bystanders were encouraged to pass through the frame themselves altering their own

spatial and cerebral realities. On such occasion, the miniature frames were also

distributed (Perry 1985).

At another event, Digger accomplices were invited to join a game called

'Intersection'. In this life-play, individuals were instructed to cross the street making

as many kinds of polygon as possible (Doyle 2002). The underlying intention of the

game was to impede traffic and deter the influx of 'straight' day-trippers, whilst

politicising the pollution affected by American technology. The Diggers unwittingly

performed as early day environmentalists.

Whilst the Diggers encouraged public participation, they were rather less receptive to

the voyeurism of the *outside* world. Indeed as the Diggers and the Haight-Ashbury

amassed more and more celebrity, the influx of *straight* tourists who came to see for

themselves this other-worldly culture, exploded. The Grey-Line bus company

launched an excursion that took in the *aberrant* sights of the Haight. It was self-billed

as 'the only foreign tour within the continental limits of the United States' (Perry

1985: 253).

Within an hour of 'Intersection' having played, 600 participants had convened on the

'Psychedelphia' site. Shortly after a number of police squad cars and *paddywagons*

arrived with the explicit intention of dispersing the crowd. What ensued was a

chaotic, improvised theatre enacted by police and Diggers. One policeman, equally

confused and aggravated by the situation decided to take on the Puppets himself:

> "You are creating a public nuisance," he called up to the puppet. "We
> warn you that if you don't remove yourselves from the area you will be
> arrested for blocking a public thoroughfare." Street theater! Heaven-sent
> absurdity! The Diggers answered back through the puppets. "Who is the
> public?" asked one puppet, bobbing its gawky arms around. "I couldn't
> care less," replied the policeman. "I'll take you in. Now move on". "I
> declare myself public- I am a public", insisted the puppet. "The streets are
> public, the streets are free". (Perry 1985: 104-105)

Activity like this met with the consternation of R.G Davis who considered the Diggers

as defective. He rejected Digger theatre as a flippant and ineffective reduction of the

Mime Troupe aesthetic; betraying the Mime Troupe's dramaturgical approach (Davis 1975).

For their own part the Diggers located a theatrical paradigm which centralised the active suspension of disbelief (Foss 1972). The suspension of disbelief lured curious and oft ambivalent youth into the bohemian extravaganza, whereupon collective enactment propagated a *free society*.

The Diggers' notion of the *free society* was heavily reliant upon two pervasive factors; one the economic buoy of post-scarcity, the other, the altruistic orientation of the countercultural community. The actual labour of Digger activities was undertaken almost exclusively on a voluntary basis. The Haight though was an ideal recruitment ground with the ever increasing consignment of youth awaiting countercultural evangelisation. Records indicate that the majority of such youth were Caucasian, middle class and with some college education; in essence the overall composition of the burgeoning counterculture (Gitlin 1987).

The main financers of the Digger enterprise were the indigenous rock bands and promoters. Of these the principal benefactors were the Grateful Dead, whose own domicile housed the *Haight-Ashbury Legal Organization*, established to provide free legal advice and help. Another source of aid came from the *Haight Independent Proprietors* (H.I.P) a group much maligned by the Diggers for their perceived act of commodifying the hippie ethic (Perry 1985). The retailer's tithe came from sales profit ironically realized from the Haight-Ashbury's cultural tourists (Graham and Greenfield 1992).

At the same time the post-war economic resources of California were munificent. In

the cold-war climate its share of military spending was colossal ensuring low rates of

unemployment and high spending. Furthermore,

> ...the Bay Area in particular benefited from being the point of departure
> and re-entry for troops involved in prosecuting the Vietnam war. (Doyle
> 2002: 80)

The next section considers the Human Be-In as the Haight-Ashbury's most famous

act of hippie carnival and as a principal example of countercultural collectivisation.

5.7 The Human Be-In

On January 14th 1967, San Francisco played host to the first Human Be-In. Spread

across the Polo fields of Golden Gate Park the world of freaks, politicos and high

priests of the counterculture congregated in a display of solidarity (Echols 2002). The

Be-In was an emphatic display of tribalism heralding the dawning of a new cultural

era, where ethereal aspirations were made sustainable and cultural and political

anomie and intolerance dissipated (Cavallo 1999). Hippies attended carrying cymbals,

incense, fruit and flowers, dressed as cowboys, prophets and shaman:

> There were figures wearing Colonial petticoats, buckskins and war paint,
> madras and saris and priest's cloaks, togas, ancestral velvets, and Arabian
> desert robes. (Braunstein 2002: 251)

5.2 (The Human Be-In (A), San Francisco, Golden Gate Park 1967)

Such sartorial choices took their root in a *Mod* sensibility which celebrated the art of

charade (Doyle 2002). Such diverse and unconventional stylisations signified the

potential for youth's manifold cultural expression set against the undemonstrative uni-

identity of adulthood. The Hippies incorporated this performative technique as a

central tenet in their programme to redeem America via carnival.

In the context of 1967 the genesis of the *flowerchild* correlated directly with the

dissipation of mid-1960s liberalism (Starr 1973). Liberalism was increasingly

antagonistic and confused, a problem exacerbated by swelling numbers of U.S troops

in Vietnam, the upsurge of anti-war movements a new Black Power stance and race

riots beginning with Watts in 1965 (Braunstein 2002). The hippie however sought a

clearing space through the mid-1960's miasma and sanctuary from war waged in

Vietnam and on the streets and university campuses of America. This they deemed

only attainable through harmonious, heterogeneous interaction. The Human Be-In

demonstrated the possibility of large numbers of different cultural and political groups

to co-exist. The next section deals with the Human Be-In as a space facilitating

countercultural neo-tribalism.

5.3 (The Human Be-In (B), San Francisco, Golden Gate Park, 1967)

Few symbols ignited the imaginations of the cultural radicals and their quest for human unity and an oneness with nature quite like Native American tribalism (Deloria 2002). It was no coincidence therefore that the Be-In's official poster advertised it as a 'Gathering of the Tribes'. At the centre of the poster was an Indian on horseback, brandishing a guitar, flanked on either side by the names of the countercultural luminaries. Its heading announced a *Pow-Wow*, a gathering of every tribe of youth committed to beginning a new America. The Be-In was designed to show that the political radicals emanating from Berkeley could inhabit and move within the same, if not similar, cultural and political infrastructure as the Haight-Ashbury hippies (Gitlin 1987). On January 12th the politico Jerry Rubin, informed journalists that the Be-In would demonstrate that the two groups were as one. The overriding, consensual objective being the cessation and withdrawal from,

" [the] games and institutions that oppress and dehumanize" such as
napalm, the Pentagon, Governor Reagan and the rat race, and to create
communities where "new values and new human relations can grow".
(Rubin in Perry 1984: 122)

5.4 (Poster of the Human Be-In 1967)

Allen Cohen editor and co-founder of the psychedelic rag the San Francisco Oracle,

and organiser of the event distributed this statement:

A union of love and activism previously separated by categorical dogma
and label mongering will finally occur ecstatically when Berkeley political
activists and hip community and San Francisco's spiritual generation and
contingents from the emerging revolutionary generation all over California

meet for a Gathering of the Tribes for a Human Be-In...Now in the
evolving generation of America's young the humanization of the
American man and woman can begin in joy and embrace without fear,
dogma, suspicion, or dialectical righteousness. A new concert of human
relations being developed within the youthful underground must emerge,
become conscious, and be shared so that a revolution of form can be filled
with a Renaissance of compassion, awareness and love in the Revelation
of the unity of all mankind. (Cohen in Perry 1984: 122)

This iconoclastic event flew in the face of American conservatism, and its practice of

ideological, cultural and geographical segregation. In doing so the Be-In tapped a

nerve that provoked the fascinations of the (inter)national media (Selvin 1994). The

press were riveted, stupefied even with the Be-In. It represented the most startling

evidence of an unanticipated mass movement. Estimates of between 10,000-20,000

comprising peoples of Hindu, Buddhist and American Indian populations fuelled the

mystique and gravity of the event (Hoskyns 1997).

While the date itself had been picked by an astrologer, the Hell's Angels volunteered

to guard the sound equipment. The Be-In was an enigma, exaggerated by the

generosity of the Diggers and Owsley who provided free turkey sandwiches and LSD

respectively. Here was the *free society*, the carnivalesque at work, fermenting a 'free

frame of reference':

> ...the event was so much bigger than a stoned meeting on Haight street
> that all most people could do was walk around and amaze themselves with
> all the faces that were present, and then sit down and rest a while. (Perry
> 1984: 126)

Media glare turned to Haight-Ashbury as an army of journalists, sociologists and

youth workers descended (Selvin 1994). The Human Be-In was the first major

pronouncement of a post-Beat wave of cultural insurgence, invention and rebirth. This

was cry of the hippie horn-blower announcing as did the compere of the event a 'welcome to the first manifestation of the Brave New World' (Perry 1985:45).

The event was however peculiar operating as an occasion without any specific meaning. As a nebulous and existential event the Be-In was framed as esoteric and cosmically significant. On the other hand perhaps it was after all just another party. The Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane played, acid was liberally consumed and a throng of 20,000 hippies, Berkeley politicos and cultural tourists took part in the act of collective being (Stevens 2000). This represented the acme of the *life act*, rescinding the platitudes of America and inculcating the ambition of social bonhomie.

The Be-In also worked as a junction between the old bohemia and its new appointees (Perry 1985). The old in Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti and Snyder presided from the Be-In's dais as revered countercultural impresarios. They demanded a foot-hold in the new generation. However the crowd of the day paid them little if no attention (Perry 1985). The significance and contribution of these cultural pillars was arguably on the wane. For the Diggers there was no hierarchy, could be no leaders.

5.5 (Allen Ginsberg and other countercultural dignitaries address the Be-In crowd)

What separates the Human Be-In from other events of the time and those since is that

the centre-piece of the occasion, the main attraction, was neither the bands that played

nor the countercultural celebrities who attended but the crowd itself. This was the

spectacle, the positive negation of Debord's 'society of the spectacle' (Debord 1967).

Prior to the Be-In the Haight-Ashbury was still very much a local secret. After it, a

frenzy of media interest anointed the Haight as the global capital of the bizarre (Selvin

1994). This was a cultural watershed whereby the Haight transformed from 'a

spontaneous expression of the counterculture to a hyped up caricature' (Echols 2002:

42). The media exploited the most obvious expositions of the day, thread a cord

between them and fixed sex, drugs and rock 'n roll as the leitmotiv of this generation.

Accordingly, the counterculture, was crudely essentialised and misappropriated by

yellow journalism. Whilst the Be-In announced the Haight to the world, the media

circus that accompanied and adapted it was its ruination. The subcultural community

of Haight-Ashbury was made oppositional, and therefore seditious by the media

agencies that authored its public image. In this instance the Haight was transformed

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from a ritual of countercultural bonhomie into a culture of resistance. The apolitical

Haight Hippie was as such politicised in the same way as Stallybrass and White

(1986) describe the carnival dialectic of antagonism:

> Carnivals, fairs, popular games and festivals were very swiftly
> 'politicized' by the very attempts made on the part of the local
> authorities to eliminate them. The dialectic of antagonism frequently
> turned rituals into resistance at the moment of intervention by the
> higher powers, even when no covert oppositional element had been
> present before. (Stallybrass and White [1986] 1997: 297)

I claim that the Haight counterculture only became identifiable as a culture of

resistance through the agencies of its mass mediation. The Yippies, which I shortly

discuss, are accordingly difficult to situate. They occupy a significant part of the

countercultural genealogy but also represent the antithesis of the Haight, as

oppositional and antagonistic. I argue as such that the Diggers provide the most

faithful articulation of countercultural carnivalesque, as non-oppositional and

maintained by 'the joyful affirmation of becoming...what Nietzsche called 'the

glowing life of Dionysian revellers'.'(Stamm 1982: 55). The next section looks at the

Summer of Love as a media event and portrayal of counterculture which signalled the

end of the Haight hippie through the process of massification.

5.8 The Summer of Love

The Summer of Love was first and foremost the product of intense media interest, reportage and caricature (Anderson 1995). Within San Francisco the stylisation of youth as redemptive, curative and rejuvenatory assumed messianic proportions. The Be-In extended this. The *flowerchild* motif stimulated national and international attention and the imagination of the corporate world (Frank 1997). It also served unintentionally as an invitation for America's lost youth to converge on the Haight-Ashbury and discover an inner hipness.

The counterculture had unwittingly invited the world media into its own backyard where the Haight hippie was easily lampooned, becoming the butt of American satire (Gitlin 1980). In turn mass exposure wrought the dissolution of hippietopia and its transformation from a subcultural form into a media and corporate construct. Furthermore the mass arrival of American youth revealed the inherent contradictions and ironies of counterculture which the minority community had contained:

> Once the Haight was flooded with reporters and lost kids, the community began unravelling…Moreover the Haight was an interracial neighbourhood bordering the black Fillmore district and the tension escalated as it filled up with middle-class young white kids renouncing the nice homes, good schools, and well paying jobs that remained out of the reach of most blacks. (Echols 2002: 42)

The friction between white hippies and their neighbours, the residents of the black Fillmore district, would often overspill into violent encounters. Beat veteran, Chester Anderson defined the Haight as 'the first segregated bohemia I've ever seen' (Hoskyns 1997: 145).

Divisions in the community further exposed the cracks in the entire Learyesqe philosophy of dropping out. At the same time psychedelic drugs such as L.S.D and marijuana were succeeded by harder drugs such as heroin, barbiturates and speed (Lee & Shlain 1985). In a now famous Digger broadside the collapse of the Dionysian dream was emphatic:

> Pretty little 16-year-old middle class chick comes to the Haight to see what it's all about & gets picked up by a 17-year-old street dealer who spends all day shooting her full of speed again & again, then feeds her 3000 mikes and raffles off her temporarily unemployed body for the biggest Haight Street gang bang since the night before last. (The Digger Papers)

The prolific writer Joan Didion, in a now famous piece entitled *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* (1967) identified a sense of foreboding. She claimed that the wonder and joy of acid had been supplanted by an interest with crystal methedrine. Heroin use similarly multiplied, in part as it alleviated the strain of the acid comedown.

The 'anything goes' mantra of the counterculture allowed genuinely subversive and psychotic types to join in. Accordingly murder rates, physical assaults, robbery and burglary soared as did the fallout from promiscuity: venereal disease and vaginitis (Hoskyns 1997). Police sweeps increased, shop fronts were bordered up and the one group providing moral sustenance, the Diggers, began to wind-down; with free food in the Panhandle coming to an end (Perry 1985). The Diggers themselves organised a 'Death of the Hippie' march where they encouraged participants to become free men and step aside from their media inspired portrayals (Doyle 2002).

The press and accordingly the public missed the point of the Haight hippie. As a distraction from the race riots, political assassinations and the ever escalating war in Vietnam, the media portrayal of the hippies verged on comic relief (Perry 1985). *Time* and *Life* magazines ran special issues whilst Hollywood released exploitation movies

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such as Corman's *The Trip* (1967) and Katzman's *The Love-Ins* (1967). In their

critique too they fell short:

> If the press had come to the Haight-Ashbury with the intention of doing
> justice to the phenomenon, reporters would have spent months
> reconstructing the intense period of development and amazing
> coincidences that had made it a magical event. As it was, reporters had
> only a couple of days to make sense of this roiling, incomprehensible mob
> of weirdos and they fell back on the stock journalistic formula of Bohemia,
> Menace to the Nation's Youth: a panorama of indolence, promiscuous sex
> and madness. The dramatic and technological dimensions were basically
> invisible to them. (Perry 1985: 271)

Musical icon of the time, Jerry Garcia would later say that,

> ...the media portrait of the innocent hippie flower child was a joke. Hey,
> everybody knew what was happening. It wasn't that innocent. Our own
> background was sort of that deeply cynical beatnik space which evolved
> into something nicer with the advent of psychedelics (in Graham &
> Greenfield 1992: 195)

The Diggers themselves denounced the perpetuation of the hippie figure. They

perceived a 'Love Hoax' committed by the Haight vendors in attempt to conceal the

deterioration of the district (Hoskyns 1997). Many longstanding Haight residents

apportioned blame to the media as mother of the hippie. Hippies were the wannabe

Beatniks, but without the pessimism or politics. These were America's 'Squares'

marching to the tune of *San Francisco* (*Be Sure to Wear Some Flower's In Your Hair*)

in search of arguably nothing more than a hedonistic hit (Grogan 1990).

Those who came in the Summer of Love it are identifiable as subcultural pretenders,

the faux-hip, dressed with counterfeit ideals of love and peace. Immigrant populations

to the Haight differed from 1965-1967. Whilst the initial contingent took root from

mainly wealthy, middle class families those

> ...who came in the spring and summer of 1967 hailed from more diverse
> backgrounds. They ranged from children of professionals to runaways

from abusive or repressive families. The new Haight residents were a
motley brew high school dropouts, religious fanatics, naïve 'flower
children', callous drug dealers, thugs and pimps. (Cavallo 1999: 140)

In 1967, the godfather of gonzo journalism, Hunter S. Thompson writing in the *New
York Times Magazine* declared that,

> The Hashbury is the new capital of what is rapidly becoming a drug
> culture...Love is the password, but paranoia is the style. (Thompson 1967:
> 25)

Many of the new arrivals lacked the intellectualism or spiritual ardour of the former

habitués who began to abandon the Haight for rural pastures. Beat elder statesman

Gary Snyder advised hippies to live communally, outside of the city, in pastoral tribes

(Doyle 2002). 'The Haight Ashbury Research Project', begun the following year

ascertained that 15% of the Summer of Love tourists were 'psychotic fringe and

religious obsessives'. It was no coincidence that future cult leader and mass-murderer

Charles Manson was a Haight resident at this time (Hoskyns 1997).

The Diggers predicted a hundred thousand arrivals that summer and went about

establishing in conjunction with other native institutions such as the Oracle, the

'Council for the Summer of Love' (Perry 1985). The imminent foray of youth

precipitated a plethora of hippie-styled outlets with 'Love Cafes' and 'Love Burger'

indicative of hippie entrepreneurship. The Haight became a countercultural theme-

park. Cavallo (1999) comments:

> A community that had relied upon long hair and weed as badges of
> authenticity and cool, found itself vulnerable to the faux-hippie con artists
> flooding into the neighbourhood and other hip enclaves across America.
> (Cavallo 1999: 45)

As the Haight-Ashbury's cultural credibility sank it experienced an upsurge in crime, destitution and unnatural death. Rape and assault became much the everyday prompting the Diggers claim that,

> Rape is as common as bullshit on Haight Street. (The Digger Papers)

Five months after the Be-In, Country Joe and the Fish manager, Ed Denson conceded to pessimism and doubt for the whole hippie thing:

> Right now it's good for a lot of people, but I have to look back at the
> Berkeley scene. There was a tremendous optimism there too, but look
> where all that went. The Beat Generation? Where are they now? What
> about hulahoops? Maybe this hippie thing is more than a fad...but I'm not
> optimistic. If the hippies were more realistic they'd stand a better chance
> of surviving. (quoted in Hoskyns 1997: 147)

The golden age of Haight Ashbury had dissipated and as organized crime spread an exodus began. Those who had originally made the Haight an Aquarian possibility now fled in droves to continue the misunderstood essence of the counterculture in rural communal retreats. Perhaps just as the Digger's appeal of 'It's free because it's yours' was intrinsically un-American so too was passage of hippiedom. Its Americanisation occurred when in 1968 counterculture became a media construct and nothing more than a popular fad. The musical Hair and expressions such as 'Far Out' signalled its commercialisation and defunctness as a genuine ideology.

At this point the counterculture returned to the underground where it existed free from the machinations of press, publicity, hype and the capitalist wheel. In their communes skirting San Francisco the Haight mission of rejuvenation continued. However on the East coast of America, a group who would later be known as the Yippies looked to adapt the counterculture as a media construct and further extend countercultural

carnival. As the second part of this chapter I offer a treatment of the Youth International Party or Yippies as both an extension and erosion of the hippie counterculture.

My case-study of the Beats and Hippies, Diggers and Yippies offers a glimpse into the trajectories of anti-hegemonic counterculture and its struggle to remain 'authentic' and outwith the dominant cultural sphere of mass society. The Hippies and Yippies are ultimately the conclusion of counterculture which leads it back to the mass society. Their music is the final confirmation of this. This case study demonstrates the ephemeral nature of countercultural trends, yet their persistence as extrapolations for cultural and commercial expression.

Aspects of the American counterculture that were incorporated into its mythology were, whilst heavily mediated, those with the greatest capacity for sensation and commerciality. For this reason the Yippies, as 'good copy', attracted significantly more attention than the Diggers. In a similar vein, the Hippies are arguably better known than the Beats. The Yippies also arguably demonstrate the privileging of style over substance.

5.9 Abbie Hoffman and the Defilement of *Amerika*.
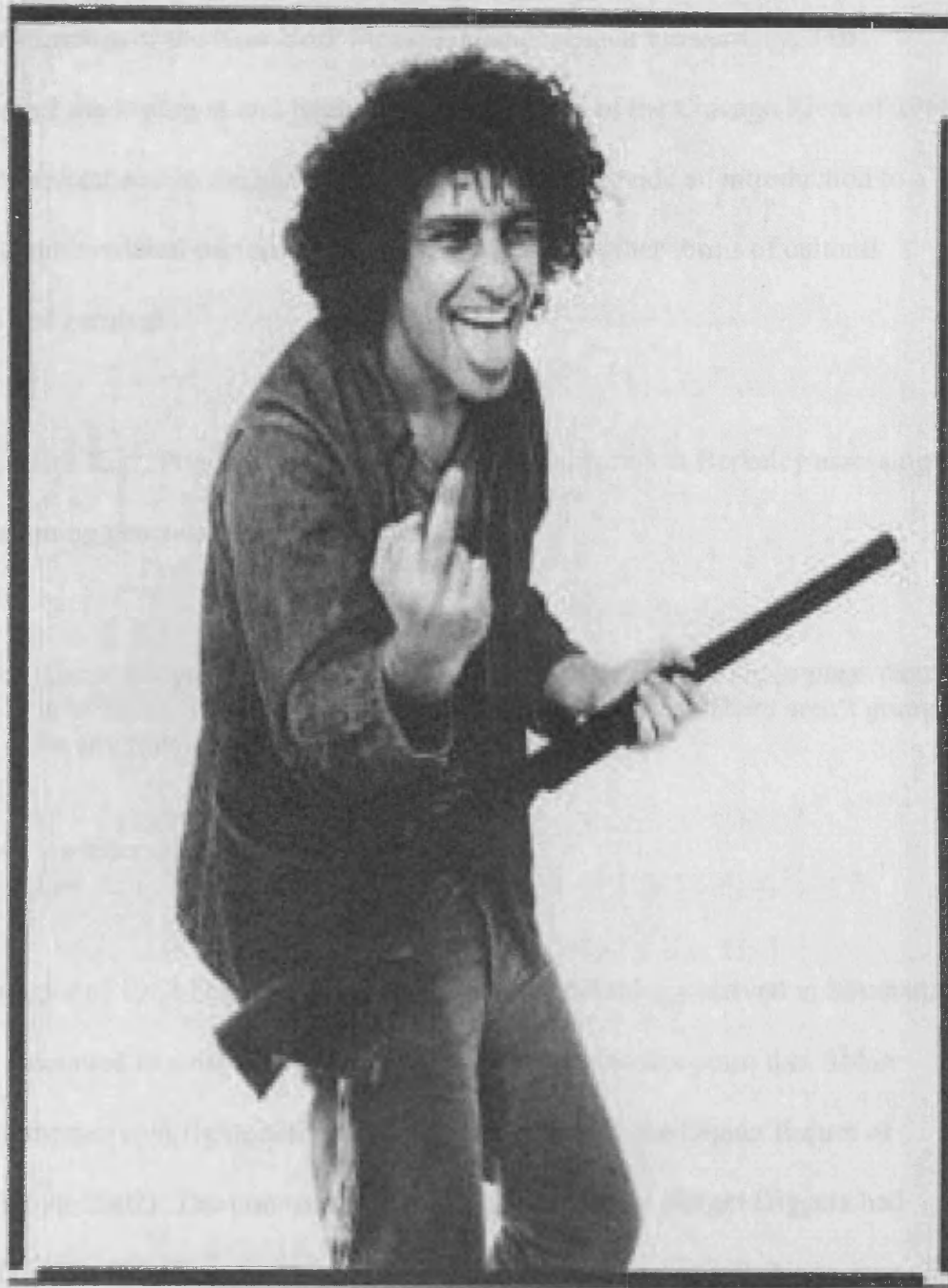
Abbie Hoffman, Yippie, New York City, September 11, 1968.

5.6 Abbie Hoffman

This section provides an analysis of the Yippies and their charismatic *front man*, Abbie Hoffman. This will consider some of the major Yippee media antics, focusing in on the storming of the New York Stock Exchange, Black Flower Day, The Levitation of the Pentagon and finally with an appraisal of the Chicago Riots of 1968. These are pivotal acts in the history of the Yippies and provide an introduction to a form of countercultural performance which has inspired other forms of cultural activism and carnival.

In 1959, Clark Kerr, President of the University of California at Berkeley assessing the forthcoming generation, predicted that,

> The employers will love this generation. They aren't going to press many grievances. They are going to be very easy to handle. There aren't going to be any riots. (Raskin 1996: 315)

This was a considerable miscalculation.

In the summer of 1967 Digger emissaries from Haight-Ashbury arrived in Manhattan on what amounted to a royal countercultural visit. It was at this point that Abbie Hoffman, former civil rights activist was familiarised with the Digger theatre of protest (Doyle 2002). The unintentional media focus that the Haight Diggers had attracted inspired Hoffman and his fellow *Yippie* counterpart Jerry Rubin to formulate their own brand of East coast Digger, one stylised directly by media fixation.

Hoffman adopted the Digger paradigm of protest theatre into a media spectacle and carnivalesque extravaganza. This did not sit well with the Haight Diggers who positioned Hoffman as a media whore (Gitlin 1987). Hoffman sought to mobilize a

culture of resistance through a hybrid of theatre and media that went beyond the counterculural enclave and into mainstream America. This was mass theatrical protest designed for televisual consumption and into the heart of corporate America (Lipsitz 1994).

Whilst the Haight was predominantly apolitical, Hoffman and Rubin blurred the margins of the cultural and political and in part forged a symbiosis of the two (Raskin 1996). The Haight Diggers however refuted their strategy. The Digger play sought to dismantle the wall between actor and audience, the two becoming one. The Yippie however firmly positioned the actor at a distance from his subject, reliance upon the media dictating so. Ironically there existed a greater distinction between the original blueprint of guerrilla theatre as postulated by R.G Davis and the San Francisco Mime Troupe, and the Haight Diggers than with the Yippies. Davis criticised the Diggers as amateurs, not fully committed nor prepared for the complete overhaul and transformation of society through art (Orenstein 1999). For Davis the Diggers' method was flawed and weak, relying exclusively upon the suspension of disbelief. Davis considered that within liminal space the Diggers failed to attain anything beyond a playful alternative to consensus reality. For Davis the Digger manifesto was less a serious political alternative and more a lightweight dramaturgical pun (Orenstein 1999). The Yippies in contrast appeared resolutely committed to a process of social radicalisation through performance. Nonetheless their interpretation of guerrilla tactics remained in effect as foreign to the original Mime Troupe scheme as the Diggers (Goffman 2004).

Hoffman situated the Yippie adaptation of guerrilla theatre as 'media freaking' (Hoffman 1968). He believed that the performance of absurdist public acts would attract the interests of the media who would in turn provide maximum and importantly free publicity (Doyle 2002). For Hoffman and fellow Yippie, Jerry Rubin, the mass media provided the most effective conduit to successfully disseminate the Yippie manifesto and by extension affect a change in public consciousness (Hoffman 1964, Rubin 1970). The Yippies coveted national, indeed, global recognition. Since its invasion of the Haight-Ashbury in the *Summer of Love* mainstream media had become the principal route for countercultural dissemination. Hoffman sought to co-opt the public broadcasting and information exchange, scripting, directing and starring in his own anarchic narratives and popularizing the message of anarchic revolution (Sloman 1998). He was the consummate showman and self-promoter, keenly aware of how to manipulate the media for his own ends:

> The trick to manipulating the media is to get them to promote an event before it happens...IN other words,...get them to make an advertisement for revolution- the same way you would advertise soap. (quoted in Howard & Forcade 1972: 69)

The Digger influence upon the Yippies, was however unmistakable and inescapable. The Diggers provided a conceptual framework and discourse for direct action that the Yippies could not help but imitate. The Yippies replicated familiar aspects of the Digger repertoire, organising food handouts in Tompkins Square Park, establishing a communication company that dispersed mimeographed broadsides (often complete reproductions of original Digger prints), opened a free store and even revised the *Intersection* game (Lee & Shlain 1985).

The Yippies did however pioneer new techniques in the neoteric program of guerrilla theatre. Place and setting were critical to the Yippie art of self-promotion and exposure. Whilst the Diggers transported theatre from the proscenium archway and to the streets of hippietopia, the Yippies furthered this re-route, intentionally situating such acts outside of the traditional hippie domains (Doyle 2002). The Yippie play positioned itself outside of the harbour of its own community and within the landscape of the straight world. This was evidenced within one of their most infamous excursions into the heart of corporate America, the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE).

The Yippies were admitted into the NYSE as *ESSO* (East Side Service Organisation), a hip social service agency, and most likely confused with the giant oil company of the same name. Having been escorted to the visitors' gallery Digger activists flung fistfuls of dollar bills that helicoptered down to the trading floor below (Rubin 1970). Biding ceased as the traders scrambled. It however, quickly dawned on the traders what had happened and the extent to which their actions represented the esurient nature of finance capitalism. Why the NYSE? The NYSE exists as the pre-eminent space for the international interchange and interplay of financial markets. The basis of such exchange is money, and this signifies a shared, collective though perhaps unconscious cultural identity and nationhood. It is in turn the instrument for social regulation and political governance:

> A symbolically important aspect of this process of monetary unification was the role of money in creating a collective identity among the users of a particular national money.4 According to this line of thought, national governments in part seized the monopoly of issuing and regulating money in order to increase the power of the state and to create greater national integration and societal cohesion. Territorialisation of money allowed

> governments to build up the nation and promote a sense of community. Money as a cultural instrument helped citizens to feel part of the same political community. Supplementing the many other symbols of identity, money was another tool for helping people identify with each other and conceptualise themselves as nationals. (Kaelberer 2004: 163)

This stunt revealed a dominant facet of the American identity; as a country and people beholden to one unifying symbol, the dollar. When the Haight-Ashbury Diggers performed a parade 'The Death of Money' they attempted to bury the capitalist regime and the dominant American identity and discourse (Cavallo 1999). The Yippies too demonstrated the vapidity of the American language of finance capitalism yet unlike the Diggers took their critique right into the heart of the American psyche. The choice of setting was demonstrably radical and ambitious. The Yippie objective of extending the discourse of dissidence beyond the countercultural ghettoes was met (Feigelson 1970).

5.10 Massification of Cultural Conversion

This section considers the Yippie ambition for the greater extension and dissemination of the discourse of cultural recovery. It also demonstrates how counterculture must by its definition remain as a microcosm. This continues the principal concern of this thesis in exploring the stages of counterculture and its ultimate assimilation or deterioration into a product of the mass society.

For the Yippies, the performance of cultural revolution, as espoused by the Diggers, was too limited and parochial in its remit. For the former such action served only to scaffold a microcosm of cultural adventure, nominally the Haight (and Greenwich Village). The Yippie agitprop however sought the full explosion of cultural rejuvenation via their guerrilla street theatre (Malpede 1973). A wider audience was essential and in order to secure such visibility the Yippies infiltrated and satirised major public institutions. This drew parallels with the *Merry Pranksters* who took their countercultural agenda on the road and out into America. With the Yippies as Pranksters, the promise of adventure, discovery and freedom associated with the West was transported back to the East. Whilst Kesey and the Merry Pranksters once routed the countercultural energies of the East to the West, inverting the traditional passage of mythic American freedom; in New York the Yippies were doing the same (Orenstein 1999).

The Yippie's morality play was particularly innovative as its unwitting participants were the narrative, actor and audience of the piece. In this respect the Yippies succeeded in dismantling the barrier between audience and actor, allowing the two

parties to not only interact but synergise (Malpede 1973). The NYSE traders, as consumers of a consensus reality, unknowingly deviated from a passive existence and engaged with, if only briefly, the Yippie phantasmagoria. There was of course a further audience, the consumers of print. Prior to the money drop Hoffman tipped off the press and accordingly disseminated the Yippie agenda to the masses (Doyle 2002).

Hoffman and Rubin identified with the countercultural ambition for cultural autonomy and self-sovereignty (Sloman 1998). For them the route to self-expression was best located through the practice of psychodrama (Goffman [1959] 1990). Psychodrama provided a framework for multiple expressions of the self. Ideologically this supposed the ability to construct an independent and unindoctrinated personality. Central to this idea was the hippie pursuit of nature and a pre-social state. For the Yippie, freedom and independence were *sui generic* (Hoffman 1968). The Yippies' political clowning facilitated a self invention and self-governance, independent and irrespective of hegemonic consumerism (Orenstein 1999). This was pure carnivalesque.

This Yippie strategy was of course far from pre-social and was entirely dependent upon a traditional socio-economic relationship. The Yippies, more than any other countercultural cadre of the 1960s understood that the mode for cultural rejuvenation was not via isolation or 'dropping out' but through a ritualistic interaction and subversion of the system that fostered it. The Yippies took to the street as a public space where political carnivalesque could unfold (Schechner 1995).

Autonomous, isolationist existence made communal living almost impossible and accounted for transient and instable communities (Miller 1999). Whilst hippie communes catered for new forms of social intimacy and community they were ultimately thwarted by an obstinate individualism as members sequestered themselves from others in a cosseted realm of self interest and spiritual self fulfilment:

> Living in a commune could be an experience that was both liberating and intimate, but all too often was a contentious, short-lived exercise in determined self absorption. (Cavallo 1999: 188)

5.7 (Alternative communal family living)

Nonetheless, a core of communes continue to exist to this day and are if anything flourishing. *The Farm* in Summertown, Tennessee is such an example of this. Founded in 1971by Haight Ashbury exile Stephen Gaskin and 320 other hippies, it survives today, occupying over 1700 acres and accommodating 200 residents (www.thefarm.org). It serves to remind that some of the ideals of the 1960s, particularly co-operative, green living persist.

Members of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) argued that the individual could never truly be free if held within the cloistered and narcissistic bubble of self-directed knowing and attainment (Gitlin 1987). For SDSers this represented a worse entrapment and fate than the subscribers of the 'lonely crowd'. Furthermore the very potential for personal autonomy was diminished through withdrawal from the social and political sphere. The prospect of an egalitarian, free and authentically democratic community was only feasible through direct participation (Hayden 2005). The hippie ideal of individual freedom at all costs was glaringly inconsistent with this. Abnegation from the dominant socio-political realm necessitated membership of direct, voluntary and alternative community associations (Cavallo 1999).

Hippies failed to create the pre-social as they were explicitly gregarious individuals. The hippie epicentres of Haight Ashbury and Greenwich Village demonstrated the importance of such inter-communication (Doggett 2007). Yet where the Diggers sought to preserve the ideals in their own cultural sanctuaries, the Yippies sought to enlighten and turn on the world through media spectacle. The next section considers two other examples of Yippie 'media freaking', the levitation of the pentagon and 'Black Flower Day'.

5.11 Levitation of the Pentagon

5.8 Levitation of the Pentagon

In 1967 as part of a peaceful march against the war in Vietnam, Abbie Hoffman and

the Yippies planned the spiritual exorcism of the Pentagon, the centre of American

military command. Whilst the Pentagon was not in event lifted, (though some of those

in attendance claim it was) the counterculture provided one of the most indelible and

iconic emblems of cultural resistance; flowers poked down the barrel of a gun. The

photograph, opposite, informs a new type of narrative that is accessible, immediate

and constant.

Pink (2001) suggests as a model of historical reflexivity, the photograph, when

properly contextualised provides a superior embodied engagement. In this instance

the photograph effectively frames the collaboration of two parties, the soldiers and

protestor and iterates a simple but distinctly humanist parable. The action of the

photograph itself being taken is evidence of the performative platform and the

evocation of a sensory, arguable empathetic understanding. This picture is what

Marks (2000) defines as a recollection image, and one which expands once

reengaged, sometimes to an exaggerated extent, in the consciousness. This was the

enormity of the power of the spectacle; this is what prompted an interpretive

distortion of what the 1960s was. Beat luminary, Allen Ginsberg, in an interview in

1987 attested to the danger of improper contextualisation in answering how the media

exploited the counterculture:

> By exaggerating the sensationalist aspect, pushing for illegalizing LSD,
> and taking fake stories like the Sergeant Jeffrey McDonald's family was
> murdered by a band of hippies marching around the room saying "kill the
> pigs" when McDonald himself had murdered his family: by playing up the
> horror stories and creating another setting which was one of hallucination,
> horror, and violence: by later using the Manson Family as symbolic of the
> hippie psychedelic movement rather than the more grounded audio
> engineers who were creating a new music. Also simply sensationalizing
> the hippie movement, like there was a Life magazine cover that showed
> somebody in the throes of some awful swirling photo montage
> hallucination that had no relation to the microscopic clarity of possible trip
> but emphasized instead madness and murder. (Harper 2002: 467)

In this instance however the narrative which the picture disseminates is relatively

straightforward. This was the preferred emblem of hippiedom. The photographic

medium provides its immortality (Sontag 1979). I have used this image as a potent

example of the Yippie's use of media in apprehending public sensitivities.

5.12 Black Flower Day

The Yippies' next act of fantastical street protest came at the Consolidated Edison Building, provider of energy to New York City. Yippies placed a wreath of ink stained daffodils on a ledge directly above the entrance lobby and a large banner reading 'Breathing Is Bad for Your Health' (Doyle 2002). Miniature replicas were similarly distributed amongst passers-by. The following day Yippie representatives ruffled waves of soot into the building's lobby and proceeded to frolic in the dirt. One Yippie made-up as a clown billowed dust clouds and danced maniacally (Sloman 1998). The Yippies were uncannily prescient, using public performance to articulate ecological concerns years before they would attract national and international attention. Such exhibitionism continued to exact admonishment from the Haight Diggers who objected to the East coast appropriation of their name. Curiously the Haight Diggers were willing to share everything with everyone, bar their name. Accordingly the New York contingent decided to sever all association with the Haight Diggers and devised their own incontestable appellative, Yippie! or Youth International Party. This new formed epithet signalled the Yippie intention to expand horizons (Malpede 1973). The next section considers the Yippies most infamous act of guerrilla theatre, Chicago 1968.

5.13 Chicago 1968: A Festival of Life

The Yippie *raison d'etre* was the formation of a national community of
countercultural praxis, a space for the union of other *movement* corps and orders of
resistance. On August 1968, the Yippies engineered *a gathering of tribes* to take place
alongside and critically mirror, the Democratic Party's Convention in Chicago, and
the election of their presidential candidate (Kurlansky 2005).

It had been an uncomfortable year for the Democrats with the assassination of Bobby
Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson's decision to abstain from re-election and a growing fault-
line in ideological stance over the war in Vietnam (Gitlin 1987). Whilst Senator
Eugene McCarthy, ran an anti-war campaign, demanding a total withdrawal of troops,
Vice-president Hubert Humphrey proposed a fairly unchanged, continuation of
policy. Humphrey eventually won his party's vote but not America's, defeated by
Republican, Richard Nixon in the presidential race. In Chicago, tensions were rife
among liberal delegates who were not only confused but appalled by the outcome of
the final ballot. Similar grievances occurring outside of the hall, fully exploded as the
counterculture and strong arm of the law raised clashed (Gitlin 1980).

Advertised as *A Festival of Life*, the Yippies hoped that a large scale gathering of
countercultural types would serve not only to distract from yet magnify the banality of
the Democrats' political wrangling. The planned countercultural convention of music
and *media freaking* at Chicago's Grant Park, was envisaged would parody and
lampoon the Democrat's electoral embroilment. The Yippies conceived an alternative
spectacle to the political humdrum, one that concerned itself less with the election of a
presidential candidate and more the delineation of a new conscious reality. The full

flock of countercultural types, musicians and luminaries such as Allen Ginsberg were

invited to attend. In the end, most stayed away, leaving only the band the *MC5*, who

delivered a legendary 8 hour set (Miller 1986). Without the requisite permits, many of

the scheduled musicians cancelled. Faced with the prospect of riotous embroilment,

many withdrew their support to the venture. *Rolling Stone* magazine, still the pre-

eminent voice of countercultural *modus vivendi*, advised against travel to Chicago,

whilst some of the event's original advocates such as Timothy Leary prescribed non-

participation (Lee & Shlain 1992).

On Saturday 24th August 1968 thousands of American youth, converged on Chicago.

The National Mobilization Committee had organised a pacifist rally beginning at the

band stand of Chicago's Grant Park. Police and troops had however sealed off the

park (Kusch 2004). The march was led by cultural icons Allen Ginsberg, William

Burroughs and Jean Genet, arms interlinked and brandishing flowers (Goffman 2004).

They provided a wonderfully exotic counter image to Mayor Daley's armed

battalions. The press photographers were suitably impressed. Following a protracted

stand-off, the march was called off. The government had denied the assembled their

basic right of peaceful protest. However, with the park closed off there was nowhere

for the marchers to go. Unprovoked the police began firing teargas in order to

disperse the marchers. Open warfare between the generations erupted:

> The police, moving in arcs of twenty or thirty men, sliced into the crowd
> with their clubs and with Mace, beating people indiscriminately. Tourists,
> newsmen and people on their way home from work were all attacked and
> beaten. So many people were injured that the Eugene McCarthy campaign
> headquarters on the fifteenth floor was turned into a makeshift hospital,
> but the police even burst into that and swept through clubbing people,
> leaving great pools of blood on the floor. (Miles 2003: 285)

Much as the politicos at the *Human Be-In* were subsumed by countercultural esprit, it was hoped that the political machinations occupying the convention centre would be similarly trumped. With the media in place, a global audience, numbering many millions was mobilised to witness the dissolution of the established political system and the triumph of youth.

Hoffman's sidekick, Jerry Rubin, sought to recreate the *communitas* of San Francisco's *Human Be-In*, which had first launched the spectacle of counterculture in the public mind:

> Our idea is to create a cultural, living alternative to the Convention. It could be the largest gathering of young people ever: in the middle of the country at the end of the summer...We want all the rock bands, all the underground papers, all the free spirits, all the theater groups – all the energies that have contributed to the new youth culture- all the tribes to come to Chicago and for six days we live together in the park, sharing, learning, free food, free music, a regeneration of spirit and energy. In a sense it is like creating a SF Berkeley spirit for a brief time in the Midwest...thereby breaking out of the their isolation and spreading the revolution...The existence of the Convention at the same time gives us a stage, a platform, an opportunity to do our own thing, to go beyond protest into creative cultural alternative. (Rubin in Doyle 2002: 90)

Instead Rubin's actions precipitated a blood bath and a charge of conspiring to incite civil unrest. In an exaggerated demonstration of strength, Chicago mayor, Richard Daley, marshalled his forces recruiting, 11,500 policemen, 5,600 Illinois National Guardsmen, 1,000 Federal Agents plus a 7,500 specialist reserve of US Army Reserves at Fort Hood, Texas, trained in riot control (Mailer 1986). Zero tolerance was ordered. As permits for rallies, marches and even for sleeping in the park was refused, Chicago readied itself for a titanic collision, portrayed here in Ralph

Steadman's pictorial. There were no flowers protruding from the police barrelheads this time.

5.9 Chicago depicted by Ralph Steadman

Hoffman and his affiliates exacerbated an already tense situation using outrageous claims, which supposedly only the under-30s, would appreciate as psychedelic contrivance. Of these many claims, the Yippies announced that they would nominate a pig for president, *Pigasus*, which once elected they would eat. They threatened to leak LSD into the city's water supply and instruct Yippie prostitutes to abduct convention delegates and drive them to Michigan (Sloman 1998). The most preposterous claim was,

> We also introduced a drug called *lace*, which, when you squirted it at the policemen made them take their clothes off and make love, a very potent drug. (Chicago 7 Trial Transcript)

These of course made excellent copy and with media darling Hoffman at the helm, the exoticism of these claims only furthered the alarm of the city's authorities.

5.10 (Chicago Police with Yippie candidate for presidency, *Pigasus*)

However the wider counterculture's reticence to participate in such a precarious, potentially volatile event was in no small part due to the climate of rage that had swept the country since the assassination of Martin Luther King on April 4th (Gitlin 1987). King's murder detonated a bomb of racial discontent resulting in nationwide race riots. The black inner-city ghettoes exploded. Racial uprising occurred in 125 cities with 46 individuals killed and 20,000 arrested as more than 50,000 federal troops and national guardsmen were deployed (Kurlansky 2005). The possibility of further unrest was understandably quite undesirable. Pitted against the brutality of

Mayor Daley's administration, the Yippies and their diminished yet faithful cohort's

only hope was pyrrhic.

5.11 (Chicago Riots, 1968)

The 10,000 that did go to Chicago were in no doubt of their combustive predicament;

their only recourse against the marauding hatchet men was the swathe of cameras to

which they bleated, 'The whole world is watching' (Gitlin 1980). Miles (2003) argues

that the Yippies simple act of being was provocation enough for Mayor Daley:

> Even elderly bystanders were caught by the police onslaught. At one point
> the police turned on several dozen standing quietly behind police barriers in
> front of the Conrad Hilton Hotel watching the demonstrators across the
> street. For no reason that could be immediately determined, the blue-
> helmeted policemen charged the barriers, crushing the spectators against the
> windows of the Haymarket Inn, a restaurant in the hotel. Finally the window
> gave way, sending screaming middle aged women and children backward
> through the broken shards of glass. The police then ran into the restaurant
> and beat some of the victims who had fallen through the windows and
> arrested them. (New York Times, August, 1968)

Television reportage vacillated between the rancour of the convention hall and the violence in the streets. Peace advocating Democrats complained of their own mistreatment and indignation of the police instigated riots that raged, exterior to the walls of their grumblings (Kusch 2004). The menace and brutality of the police riot seeped into the timbre of conference proceedings, which exuded an indubitable bellicosity:

> When Abraham Ribicoff suggested that if peace advocate George McGovern were being nominated for president, instead of Lyndon Johnson's vice president, Hubert Humphrey, "we wouldn't be having Gestapo tactics on the streets of Chicago", Mayor Richard Daley responded in perfect Gestapo fashion by calling Ribicoff a, "Jew son of a bitch"". (Goffman 2004: 292)

In event, the Yippies were manipulated by the apparatus they naively assumed they controlled. They became media fodder and marionettes of televisual puppetry. As a media construct and pastiche of a culture of resistance, the Yippies failed to move beyond their signification. They degenerated into what the Haight Diggers called 'radical phoneys' (Gitlin 1987). Instead of increasing and galvanising popular support, Chicago resulted in a bloody street battle that lost the Yippies favour and most importantly, their *ratings*. In this final section I detail the ultimate collapse of the post-war counterculture as Beat, Hippie, Digger and Yippie.

The next and final part of this chapter deals with the eventual collapse of the Yippies.

5.14 Collapse

The Diggers who were virtually anonymous came and went whilst the media spectacle of the Yippies appeared, in event, to be a flawed and destitute strategy. Whilst the counterculture successfully engaged its youth, it failed to substantiate any well-founded cultural permanency. Without a structured ideology the countercultural praxis floundered.

The principal handicap of the cultural revolutionary is the matter of permanence For Chairman Mao, revolution was a permanent state. For the radical hippie this was not only unsustainable but in the first instance unattainable.

I argue that the hippie neo-tribe was not in actuality an attempt for social revolution. This version of it was a media construct. Indeed much of what is claimed of culture of resistance I suggest is media narrative and exaggeration. The Diggers' 'Death of the Hippie' evidenced the distance of these two typologies. The hippie was a revolution of lifestyle and the formation of *tribus* and a distinctive lexicon specific to youth. This was a 'revolution for the hell of it' (Hoffman 1968). Claims which link the counterculture to a process of total social reorganisation are misplaced.

The Yippies anti-American posturing disconnected and alienated them from public sympathy. Chicago accordingly signalled the denouement of Yippie enterprise and its reduction to an execrated cliché. Ironically this is much the process of carnivalesque and 'billingsgate'.

A year later at the Woodstock music and art fair, guitar virtuoso Jimi Hendrix,

reengaged the horror of Chicago in the prologue to his aptly titled song *Machine Gun*,

a protest song to the Vietnam war. As a gathering of tribes, where Chicago failed,

Woodstock succeeded. The only cameras that were there however were the

counterculture's own.

The public response to Chicago was one of indignation at the irresponsibility and

imprudence of *anarchist* youth. Indeed, more than 50% approved of the police

response and de facto manhandling of the youthful incendiaries (Gitlin . Chicago

signalled that these *agent provocateurs* had no place in the world of *real* politics and

their aspiration of political transfiguration was little more than the melodramatic and

schmaltzy murmur of dramaturgical invention. Hoffman's *Amerika* would not only

desert him and his boisterous legionnaires but affirm and strengthen the lintel of

power that scaffolded the elite, electing none-other than law and order candidate

Richard Nixon. The apostles of freedom, Amerikan outlaws and media subverters by

their own reasoning ultimately failed:

> Two years in a revolution, even a revolution for the hell of it, is a long
> time. The Lower East Side has O.D'ed on heroin. People's Park was
> created and crushed by them. *Woodstock Nation* was born and diluted by
> the celluloid world of hip capitalism. The Black Panthers have emerged as
> the most revolutionary force in the land. The Weathermen have unleashed
> the rage inside each Yippie, and Yippies have turned on the Weathermen
> digging culture...It is true that our revolution must be born of joy, but it's
> going to take more than some neat pranks to radically change this society.
> Never again will I spell America with a "c", for in the eyes of Amerika we
> have all been declared outlaws. An armed struggle is not only inevitable, it
> is happening, and the Yippies are a part of that. Folks will mumble, "Abbie
> sure has lost his sense of humour", but they never understood *Revolution
> for the Hell of It*. My book was written with treason in my heart. It was
> written with the knowledge that the institutions of and values of
> imperialism, racism, capitalism and the Protestant ethic do not allow
> young people to experience authentic liberation. It was written with the

intention of making fun subversive. And finally make no mistake about it, it was written with the hope of destroying Amerika. Yippie. (Other Scenes Magazine, October 1970)

Their testament arguably did not. They provided the model for what and what not to do; how to manipulate the media and how not to be manipulated by it. The Yippies in part were the extension of Debord's (1967) Spectacle. Nonetheless they forcefully demonstrated that youth was a powerful source for the dissemination of alternative social behaviour.

5.15 Final Remarks

Across two sections I have dealt with the performance of local and national counterculture. In this instance that which is authentic and that imitated and co-opted. The Yippies provide a useful means of demonstrating how the popularisation or massification of cultural schemes causes claims of inauthenticity through media subversion to rise. Nonetheless exposure to the narrative and image which accompanies the Yippies is significantly broader.

My case-study of the Beats and Hippies, Diggers and Yippies offers a glimpse into the trajectories of anti-hegemonic counterculture and its struggle to remain 'authentic' and outwith the dominant cultural sphere of mass society. The Hippies and Yippies are ultimately the conclusion of counterculture which leads it back to the mass society. This case study demonstrates the ephemeral nature of countercultural trends, yet their persistence as extrapolations for cultural and commercial expression. The Beats, Hippies, Diggers and Yippies, as aspects of counterculture, are a cultural resource which provides for new forms of *bricolage* and facilitates the cycle of constant cultural reinvention. This of course, ironically, mainly occurs though a capitalist framework.

The hippie counterculture, most especially through its music, demonstrates that cultural expression and subjectivity are in constant flux and continually competing against being pigeonholed or mainstreamed. I argue that the performance of the Hippies, Diggers and Yippies evinces countercultural as a process of constant reinvention and *bricolage*; enriching and challenging social perceptions and ways of living. The carnival of the American countercultural is a case-study of cultural

antagonisms, which demonstrates how performance is infinitely adaptable and

replicable for different user groups, be they commercial or not.

These tensions will be furtherly developed in the next chapter which constitutes the

final treatment of subcultural performance. The following chapter is a treatment of

1960s rock music as a subcultural tribe, lifestyle and tradition. It also begins the final

third of the thesis much is the discussion of its central themes.

Chapter 6
Music of the Counterculture

6.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides a discussion of rock music as a cultural practice and artistic form from which the sixties counterculture of the Haight-Ashbury emerges. This considers a specific style of rock music, local to the Haight-Ashbury and known as the San Francisco Sound. This chapter begins with a discussion of the efficacy of music as a (sub)cultural strategy and the situation of rock as a particular type of cultural aesthetic. It then provides a genealogy of popular music which contextualises rock and accounts for its evolution. Of central concern is how rock fits into a discussion of cultural authenticity; complicated by technology and commercialism. This chapter considers rock music as a form of *bricolage* and as a model of production and consumption which elicits themes of creative autonomy, amateurism, connoisseurship, commerce and work. In the course of Chapter 6, rock music is seen to foster a new means of social organisation as subcultural neo-tribe and zone exemplified by the hippies and Haight-Ashbury. Rock music is approached as a source of political discourse, collective memory and as a technological project signifying modernism. In addition this chapter considers the consumption of rock and its presentation as live performance and recording. This chapter situates rock as both a cultural paradigm and commercial entity which serves as a powerful tool in the negotiation of subcultural subjectivity.

The chapter focuses on bands native to San Francisco, particularly the Haight Ashbury, namely, The Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane and Big Brother and the Holding Company. These were chosen as prime examples of countercultural praxis, as integral members of the Haight-Ashbury community and as bands who struggled for creative autonomy against commercial co-option. These three bands are contrasted

with Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention who provide a polemic of *hippietopia*,

Bob Dylan as a generational leader and Country Joe and the Fish as emblematic of an

overtly politicised psychedelia. There is of course a catalogue of other types of

American popular music from the sixties which I do not consider such as Country and

Western and *Motown*. Similarly there are many artists within the rock canon of this

period that are also not fully treated, most notably British bands, The Beatles and

Rolling Stones. This is an account which situates an American rock tradition.

6.2 Sources

The sources for this chapter are multiple and fall into seven distinct categories. I begin

with the principal theorists of music and rock music. These include: Beard and Gloag

(2005); Bennett (2003, 2004); Connell & Gibson (2003); De Nora (2003); DeCurtis

(1992); Eyerman & Jamison (1998); Friedlander (1996); Frith (1981, 1988, 1996);

Garofalo (1992); Gillet (1970); Gracyk (1996); Grossberg (1984, 1992, 1993); Ingram

(2006); Mowitt (1996); Negus (1996, 1999); Regev (1992, 1994, 2002); Reynolds

(1998); Sardiello (1994); Shepherd (1991); Straw (1991a, 1991b, 2001); Street

(2003), Strinati (1995); Whiteley (2004) and Wicke (1982, 1990). The next category

of literary sources is cultural theorists. These include: Adorno ([1941] 1991),

Bourdieu (1969), Deleuze & Guattari (1987); Du Gay (1997); Hebdige (1978); Laing

(1996); Lasch (1991); Lefebvre (1984); Marcus & Fischer (1986); Miège (1989);

Peterson (1976, 1997); Redhead (1990); Stumway (1992); Thornton (1995); Williams

(1958) and Willis (1978). The third category is that of biographical testimonials from

those of the time. This consists of political activist and SDS leader Gitlin (1993);

Grateful Dead manager, Scully (1993) and Merry Prankster biographer, Wolfe (1989).

The fourth category of rock historians includes Brightman (1998); Goodman (1998);

Guterman (2005); Selvin (1999) and Sounes (2001). Also belonging to this category

is the work of Pinch & Trucco (2002) on the *Buchla Box* and *Moog* synthesizer. The

fifth category is rock journalism. This includes the work of Hoskyns (2003) and

Lydon (1992). The penultimate source is singular and that was from the pen of Frank

Zappa himself, Zappa (1989). The final source used was that of generalist history

pertaining to the 1960s counterculture. Those deemed the most authoritative and

hence used were Braunstein (1992); Cavallo (1999); Echols (2002); Goffman (2004);

Kurlansky (2005); Lee and Shlain (1992); Miles (2003) and Miller (1999).

Throughout the course of writing this chapter the music of the Grateful Dead,

Jefferson Airplane, Bob Dylan and the Mothers of Invention were never far away.

6.3 The Efficacy of Music

Music forms one of the most immediate and universal methods for the articulation of social and cultural practice. Shepherd (1991) claims that it provides a developmental framework facilitating the production of innovative cultural subjectivities and experiential landscapes:

> ...timbre, the tactile core of sound, encodes and articulates the logics through which individuals creatively embrace the social world and construct a unified and manageable experiential core of personality and reality. (Shepherd 1991: 91)

As a cultural form it serves to tribalise and territorialise[1], offering a cultural commentary of the social world (Frith 1981). It can be primal or elaborate, easy or demanding, compliant or troublesome, celebratory or negatory. It provides a soundtrack to people's lives, a prompt that stirs the senses, an invitation to coalesce and a route to sensuality and the kinetic (Connell & Gibson 2003). DeNora (2003) suggests that,

> Music is a response to which agents turn so as to regulate themselves as aesthetic agents, as feeling, thinking and acting beings in their day-to-day lives. (DeNora 2003: 95)

It is perhaps fair and,

> ...accurate to say that music is the most powerful affective agency in human life; music seems, almost independently of our intentions, to produce and orchestrate our moods...it is music which founds place. It is music which calls forth our investments and hence, our affective anchors into reality. (Grossberg 1993: 23)

As an anchor of reality, music is a means to heightened self-knowing and diverse cultural interactions and alternate social spaces:

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[1] Such is the case with the San Francisco Sound.

It is a medium, in other words, of action. Music gives us modes and instrumentalism for doing social life. (DeNora 2003: 157)

Music provides an experiential method for personal and social development. It,

...constructs our sense of identity through the experiences it offers of the body, time and sociability, experiences which enable us to place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives. (Frith 1996: 275)

Accordingly, music not only 'gives us a way of being in the world, a way of making sense of it' but it also opens up alternate social territories, perspectives, styles and choices (Frith 1996: 272). As such, distinctive cultural groups, or what Maffesoli (1996) calls 'neo-tribes', emerge. The music of the 1960s counterculture is indicative of this trend of cultural fragmentation and diversification that subsequently intensified as a multitude of different music enclaves such as indie, garage, r&b and hip-hop. Indeed musicologists Beard & Gloag (2005) point out that,

The pluralization of popular music can now be seen to be a reflection of a wider social and historical process. It suggests that popular music, rather than being just a reflection of this process, is an active agent in its construction and a definitive statement of a contemporary post-modern condition. (Beard & Gloag 2005: 135)

Music also frames and is framed by tradition. It can be interpreted by what Bluestein (1994) identifies as a 'poplore', the positive, progressive role of folk traditions in transforming popular culture. It opens up for the listener different narratives of life experience, other social and cultural trajectories and modes of living. Eyerman and Jamison (1998) claim that,

Musical traditions embody particular experiences and frameworks of meaning, and utopian images of possible futures. (Eyerman and Jamison 1998: 46)

Music may be loaded with rich symbolism and images, specific to certain cultures and history, facilitating the production of cultural identity. It furthermore incorporates and adapts past narratives to frame current realities:

> As the carrier of (past) traditions, music bears images and symbols which help frame (present) reality. Music represents many traditions, as it expresses a range of social forces and processes, local cultures, and...inevitable tensions between commercial and political interests. (Eyerman and Jamison 1998: 45)

Music creates a space for social interaction and a means of self-knowing where individual (and transient) subjectivities materialise within a web of associative meanings:

> Music interacts with the body, imparting rhythm and pace to individual and concerted social activities. It also furnishes meaning through the associations of cultural nostalgia, personal biography and private memory. (Atkinson 2006: 37)

Cohen (1980) studied youth subcultures in the East End of London in the 1970s. He argued that the two main components of youth subculture are 'plastic', that of dress and music and 'infrastructural', that of jargon and ritual. This is a rather difficult categorical separation. Rock music is not only a signifier of cultural tradition and argot but forms a cultural tradition itself. It is too enmeshed within the 'infrastructural' process of cultural dissemination to be understood as a separate construct.

> In other words, in examining the aesthetics of popular music we need to reverse the usual academic argument: the question is not how a piece of music, a text "reflects" popular values but how – in performance- it produces them. (Frith 1996: 270)

Sixties rock music was a type of cultural performance facilitating alternative social space and realities. The Bay Area bands - The Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane and Big Brother and the Holding Company - offered what Shields (1994: 87) refers to as

an 'enactment of lifestyle'; an arena and catalyst for cultural experimentation. There is a sense that rock music like, 'social movements are cultural laboratories, arenas for the creative work of deconstructing and recombining the materials, or resources, of traditions' (Eyerman and Jamison 1998: 41). Rock music may be interpreted as a programme of living, a paradigm of social organisation and a type of subcultural collective. In the instance of the rock community 'music not only represents social relations, it also and simultaneously enacts them' (Threadgold 1988: 29-30). I consider rock music as both *habitus* and *tribus*. In the context of the 1960s, rock was a cultural style and movement in its own right, yet nonetheless a social phenomenon which simultaneously inhabited and excoriated the dominant realm.

Grossberg (1993) talks of music as a 'territorializing machine' which assists in the navigation of everyday life. Rock music holds the capacity of directing its listener to a specific subjectivity and place in the everyday. It also however, demonstrates a deterritorializing effect.

> Its power lies in its ability not only to construct maps of everyday life, but also deconstruct such maps as well...It can challenge the particular stabilities of any organization of everyday life. (Grossberg 1993: 23)

Processes of territorialisation and deterritorialisation ultimately configure rock music as a paradox or conflict between a need for cultural stability and delineation, and youth's urge, or predisposition, for flux and mutability. Accordingly rock music exists not as an activity exterior to everyday life but as a type of cultural style and enterprise which not only emerges from, but actually defines the mass society. Rock music as a form of flight or escape from mass culture offers alternative cultural and social frameworks. Yet these do not obliterate the overarching spectacle or scheme of the cultural world but diversify and extend it. Rock is one subsidiary within a paradigm of

cultural fission. Whilst preoccupied with a resistance to and negation of the capitalist

conditions of its own existence rock musicians are nonetheless aware of them.

Connell and Gibson (2003) argue that,

> Music is an industry (or more accurately a series of economic clusters and
> networks), like any other geared towards commodity production. (Connell &
> Gibson 2003: 7)

Indeed rock musicians provide in part an open and public endorsement of consumer

culture, typified by a lifestyle of excess and materialist extravagance (Graham &

Greenfield 1992). The cult of celebrity, or what Shepherd (1991) defines as 'star

status', situates rock artisans as both part of the mass society and distinct from it:

> The musicians are different, so the implication goes, not because of their
> radical lifestyles and musical utterances, but because of the hard work which
> has enabled them to escape the condition of the masses and succeed.
> (Shepherd 1991: 150)

I agree with Frith (1996) when he says that rock music as a genus of popular music

affects a transcendence which 'articulates not music's independence of social forces

but a kind of alternative experience of them' (Frith 1996: 275). Rock is self-

consciously ambivalent, a cultural contradiction which territorializes and

deterritorializes within a cycle of authentic and co-opted claims (Grossberg 1998).

Keightley (2001) argues that rock is unique within the music industry:

> Rock proferrs musical shelter from the complexities and contradictions of
> capitalism and consumerism by conceiving of itself as a 'special case' of mass
> consumption. (Keightley 2001: 126)

The cultural ambiguities of rock inform much of my discussion; which begins with an

interrogation of rock as a social and cultural enterprise and artefact.

6.4 What is Rock Music?

This thesis situates rock music as a type of musical *bricolage*. Rock artisans borrowed from and assimilated established musical idioms in forming a modern musical genus. It is an amalgam of styles which 'arose out of the cross-cutting influences exerted by country and western, on the one hand, and urban rhythm 'n' blues, on the other' (Strinati 1995: 234). Rock's method of production is, in this respect, similar to rap music which Negus (1999: 489) portrays 'as a cultural practice that involves the quite explicit creative appropriation of existing sounds, images and technologies and their reconstitution as a new art-form'. Rock like rap, is identifiable as a musical paradigm whose production is dependent upon forms of consumption. Accordingly the production of rock is dependent upon the interface between what Connell and Gibson (2003) refer to as 'gatekeepers' of the cultural economy:

> The economics of music cannot be divorced from the networks of people who make and promote it. (Connell & Gibson 2003: 8)

The production of culture, and in this example rock, does not occur exclusively within a corporate, capitalist environment. The difficulty with the culture industry thesis, as Miège (1989) argues, is the assumption that all culture is produced in a similar way within a unified field and as a standardized, singular process. This is clearly not the case. Though they often interact, music, literature, cinema and art occur in distinct and separate realms. Furthermore what of the music which has no capitalist orientation, which is purely artisanal[2] or state/charity sponsored? It seems that the gatekeepers of rock are more diffuse and heterogeneous than initially supposed. Rock music is the result of what Negus (1999: 490) refers to as 'broader cultural formations and practices which may not be directly within the control or comprehension of the

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[2] In April 2008 'Coldplay' provided via their website, a free download of the first single 'Violet Hill' from the forthcoming album *Viva la Vida*.

company'[3]. The San Francisco Sound of the 1960s is the full expression of this. I suggest, using the theory of Williams (1961, 1965) and Hall (1997), that rock music allows a 'whole way of life' and culture through which members create meaningful relationships.

More so than any other dramaturgical or artistic strategy music invades and critiques everyday spaces:

> While books and television are typically consumed in the privacy of our homes, music regularly intrudes upon the variety of spaces in which our lives unfold...The sense that music easily invades the lives of others has helped to give music its political edge, its place in the conflict of generation, gender, ethnicity and class. (Straw 2001: 58)

Rock, much like other music forms such as tango, samba or bossa nova, is intrinsically physical and emotional. Music, in this instance, is a powerful means of non-verbal communication capable of excavating types of cultural aesthetic and narrative which may otherwise lie dormant. In an evaluation of music's emotional potency DeNora (2003) argues that,

> Compared to the theatre, moreover, music does something unique. It is (unless it involves text or libretto) non-verbal. And because of this, music is often experienced as the most emotionally direct medium, one with a capacity to appeal to the body and the emotions in ways that exceed other aesthetic media. (DeNora 2003: 83)

Rock represents the synergy of entertainment and cultural aesthetics. This thesis argues that sixties rock formed the basis from which youth's post-modern subjectivity arose:

> Rock music thus articulated post-modernism and youth alienation. It combined entertainment with social identity and values such as resistance, refusal, alienation and marginality. (Connell & Gibson 2003: 41)

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[3] In October 2007 'Radiohead' let fans judge how much they wanted to pay to download their seventh album *In Rainbows*.

I accordingly use rock as a cogent example of the carnivalesque. It induces the

vibrant, sensual, erotic and primal:

> ...it is, above all, fun – the production of pleasure (e.g., in the sheer energy of
> the music, the danceable beat, the sexual echoes, etc.). In fact, the most
> devastating rejection of a particular rock and roll text is to say that it is
> 'boring' (Grossberg [1984] 1997: 482)

Rock music, particularly that belonging to sixties' San Francisco, was unashamedly

amateur. The evidence is that when it began, San Francisco rock was not produced

with the rigid division of labour characteristic of New York's Tin Pan Alley. *Acid*

Rock denied the sectional procedure of the production line dispensing with the

principles of scientific management. Manager and biographer of The Grateful Dead,

Rock Scully (1996) claims that West coast rock bands were extemporized affairs, who

much like their music, were thrown together and improvised. Bands such as the

Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane were as ad-hoc in the assembly of their

personnel as their music (Friedlander 1996) which Scully & Dalton (1996) describe

as:

> ...catchpenny epics of noodling, circling riffs. Holding patterns of songs.
> Garcia carries on these long, looping musical, telepathic conversations with
> his guitar, adjusting the flow from beat to beat, drifting from mood to mood.
> (Scully & Dalton 1996: 19)

Rock historian, Selvin (1999) considers what he claims to be the impromptu,

accidental formation of Jefferson Airplane:

> Balin happened by the Matrix one afternoon when the as-yet unknown
> Quicksilver band was trying out a new guitarist, a tall, handsome
> fellow...Skip Spence. Balin took one look at Spence, judged his teen appeal.
> "You're our drummer", he announced to an astonished Spence. "Do you play
> drums?" "No," he said, "I sing and play guitar". "Why don't you get some
> sticks and work with them, you know? You'd be a great drummer I can tell",
> Balin said. "I don't play drums", said Spence. "Play for a week and see what
> happens. If you can play in a week, you can play in our group", said Balin. So
> Spence became the Airplane's new drummer. (Selvin 1999: 34)

Selvin (1999) also points out how even a countercultural band such as the Jefferson

Airplane was far from being entirely anti-commercial as demonstrated by Balin's

consideration of Skip Spence's teen appeal.

Whilst rock demanded hard work, long hours and a commitment to it as an art,

professionalism in the conventional sense was hardly a prerequisite (Cavallo 1999).

Nevertheless opportunism, and for Balin, not a little entrepreneurial instinct, aided the

creation of the rock sound. Rock music was unmistakably a part of the booming

teenage market in America for which it was both mainstream and oppositional.

Keightley (2001) comments:

> The massive youth demographics of the 1960s allowed rock to be born within
> the mainstream of popular music and, at the same time, to organise itself
> around an oppositional stance toward mass culture. (Keightley 2001: 126)

However music fans, cultural intermediaries (publicists), music critics and

musicologists like Shepherd (1991) argue that this oppositional stance is counterfeit:

> Rather than acting as a catalyst for social change, much rock music comes to
> act as an agent of social control. Through rock music, youth groups are fed
> many of the major elements of capitalist ideologies and depressingly enough
> some of rock stars aid the process through their own statements and actions.
> (Shepherd 1991: 150)

In many respects the rock music industry of the sixties reflected a revolution in the

corporate world. This will be more fully discussed in Chapter 7. This was

demonstrated by Joseph Smith, a talent scout for Warner Bros. who claimed upon

signing the Grateful Dead,

> I don't think Jack Warner will ever understand this, I don't know if I
> understand this myself, but I really feel like they're good. (Selvin 1999: 94)

The sixties rock artist represented fertile ground for new forms of creative

consumption. The counterculture was identifiable as a different type of cultural

consumer or what Straw (2001) calls a 'skilled consumer':

> Critics of music subcultures sometimes argue that their members are simply
> better, more skilled and devoted consumers of capitalist commodities than the
> mainstream music fans they so consistently denigrate. (Straw 2001: 69)

The artist, like the consumer, is rock music's laboratory where claims of aesthetic

authenticity are best tested.

Hebdige and Willis (1978) provide a treatment of rock music not dissimilar to the

auteur theory of rock 'n roll which cites the meaning of music as emergent from the

songwriter, performer and producer. This is what serves to 'legitimize rock 'n roll

culture' (Du Gay 1997: 116).

> If either the artist or the consuming community is the primary creator of its
> meaning, then rock 'n roll does have the liberatory power so often claimed for
> it. (Du Gay 1997: 117)

Without a singular defining discourse, rock is susceptible to exaggeration and

mythologisation. The rock *auteur* may become so convinced of his/her revolutionary

power, so detached from the everyday that he/she becomes a product and extension of

his/her own mythology (Frith & Goodwin 1990). This in many respects was the result

of the massification of bohemia in the late sixties. This too is the difficulty of situating

rock music as an 'authentic' cultural phenomenon. Ingram (2007) argues that rock

suffers the same predilection towards cultural elitism and hype that beset the self-

proclaimed revolutionaries of the 1960s:

...tended to allow its members to ignore their own complicity in the consumer society, and took the place of a more potentially radical questioning of class and racial division in the United States. (Ingram 2007: 1)

The rock music *fraternity*, inherently patriarchal, is prone to believing its own hype.

Its privileging, indeed assertion of spectacle above all else, can be said to subjugate its

aesthetic and critical capacity. Rock music, however, exists in two vastly different

forms. One is a vitriolic denunciation of the 'square', conformist, predictable,

mundane and everyday. To this, 'rock music expresses rage, alienation, anomie,

anxiety, anger, fear' (Regev 1994: 91). The other is an acceptance of cultural boredom

which offers 'an expression of immediate hedonism: love, sex, dance, consumerism'

(Regev 1994: 91).

There are two ways of approaching rock as a cultural aesthetic. The first claims that

rock music's value as a force of critique is diminished by its own cultural

ambivalence. The second argues that consumers of rock music accept the conditions

of its production and locate a cultural value through vitriol and humour and as

dedicated rock connoisseurs. This thesis is aligned with the second approach. It

frames rock, as a form of cultural resistance, which is an iteration of what Deleuze

and Guattari (1987) denote as 'lines of flight'. These demonstrate that rock is at once

an integral component of political economy whilst its polemic. Marcus & Fischer

(1986) contend that,

> ...not only is the cultural construction of meaning and symbols inherently a matter of political and economic interests, but the reverse holds true – the concerns of political economy are inherently about conflicts over meanings and symbols. (Marcus & Fishcer 1986: 85)

The 'lines of flight' thesis suggests that rock music exists as a socio-political

discourse that occurs outside the mainstream whilst being fixed to it. These 'lines of

flight' occur as themes of teenage rebellion, self-discovery, the open road, the mythic West, an uncertainly changing world, enlightenment, satori, catharsis, redemption and freedom (Grossberg 1984). These also form the basis of the rock set-list. Of all the 'lines of flight' the most repeated and versatile yet misappropriated and intangible concept is that of freedom. The countercultural concept of freedom is best denoted as 'other than' or in opposition to dominant cultural discourse. This is best epitomised by Paul Kantner of San Franciscan band, Jefferson Airplane and his demand for 'free minds, free dope, free bodies, free music'[4].

The rock music of the hippy counterculture articulated the inversion and freedom of the capitalist order which only the Diggers came close to realising. The 'flower-power', utopianistic and Romantic vision of the pre-modern society and the emergence of subcultural environmentalism (that hallowed a return to American ruralism and the disavowal of American industrialisation) is clearly identifiable within hippy rock (*Jefferson Airplane Takes-Off* 1966; *Surrealistic Pillow* 1967; *Electric Music for the Mind and Body* 1967)). Interestingly many prominent members of the 1960s rock establishment, such as Country Joe and the Fish leader Joe McDonald, became major proponents of the environmental cause:

> Joe McDonald[5] became involved in animal rights and whale conservation; after two decades of environmental activism in his locality, Ed Sanders of the Fugs founded the *Woodstock Journal* in 1995 with his wife, the writer and painter Miriam R. Saunders; Stewart Brand, former member of Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters, founded the *Whole Earth Catalog* in the fall of 1968, and in 1996 became a founder member of the Long Now Foundation, an organisation dedicated to promoting long-term thinking about the future of global ecosystems. (Ingram 2007: 1)

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[4] Kanter, P. *Blows Against the Empire*. RCA. 1970
[5] of Country Joe and the Fish and the now famous, Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die-Rag

The rock musicians of the 1960s provide an important example of how rock not only

experiences politicization but also how the dramaturgical strategy of music caters for

the dissemination of vital social and cultural discourse. The next section situates the

evolution of rock within a genealogy of popular music.

6.5 A Genealogy of Popular Music

Before 1965, the American popular music industry was highly regulated and managed according to a strict division of labour. Record companies, staffed by teams of young writers were responsible for an eviscerated adaptation of black America's acoustic blues and urban rhythm and blues. This was the era of New York's *Tin Pan Alley*, a conveyor belt of bubble gum pop and bowdlerized hits carefully managed by an Artists and Repertoire Executive, known more commonly as an A&R man. These executives oversaw the hiring and assigning of performers, recording engineers and potential hit songs. Musical celebrities of the time such as Pat Boone and Frankie Avalon were carefully groomed and cultivated, not as artists who created and styled their own music, but as 'entertainers'.

In 1965, with the invasion of British bands such as the Beatles and singer-songwriters like Bob Dylan rising in prominence, the rock 'n' roll landscape altered remarkably. The role of 'entertainer' was supplanted by that of 'artist' whose contribution to the production process was demonstrably accentuated. The artist was no longer a peripheral part producer in the composition and dissemination of rock but its essence; its creative and driving force.

San Francisco Acid Rock as a type of self-originating music dispensed with formulaic production ethics. It transcended the production line of *Tin Pan Alley* and espoused autonomy, independence, and originality located within a creative subjectivity. The new musical innovators sought a creative autonomy detached from the entrapment of commerce where music was more artistic expression than cultural product. The

pursuit and attainment of creative autonomy was necessarily pivotal for the success of rock.

> If you want to come up with a singular, most important trend in this new music, I think it has to be something like: it is original, composed by the people who perform it, created by them- even if they have to fight the record companies to do it- so that it's really a creative action and not a commercial pile of shit thrown together by business people who think they know what John Doe and Mr. Jones really want. (Zappa cited in Wicke 1990: 93)

Lyrics morphed from safe, superficial and mass produced clichéd rhymes of puppy love-'I'll be home, my darling, please wait for me. We'll stroll along together, once more our love will be free'[6] to iconoclastic compositions that spoke of the self and its place in the world 'Johnny's in the basement mixing up the medicine, I'm on the pavement thinking about the government'[7]. This music dealt with much of the social turmoil of the sixties and was often stridently anti-establishment. Within the Jefferson Airplane's 'We Should Be Together' from their 1969 album *Volunteers*, the counterculture is depicted as 'outlaws in the eyes of America...forces of chaos and anarchy' who 'steal, cheat, lie, whore, fuck, hide and deal'. As a united tribe, 'come on now together, get it on together, everybody together' the Airplane assail the establishment, 'Up against the wall, motherfucker'.

Lyrics developed from a flat, one-dimensional linearity into spontaneous eruptions or streams of thought. Rock lyrics matured into important cultural statements which signified and critiqued a subjectivity which was fragmentary, isolated yet immediate. The Airplane's *Surrealistic Pillow* (1967) for one, not only placed the San Francisco sound on the global map but demonstrated rock's multi-layered lyrics and hybridised

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[6] *I'll Be Home* (1956) recorded by Pat Boone.
[7] *Subterranean Homesick Blues* (1965) Bob Dylan

sound (Friedlander 1996). The Airplane's hit song, '*White Rabbit*', was both a children's parable via 'Alice in Wonderland', and condemnation of American society. Singer Grace Slick, speaks of 'feeding your head' to avoid the 'men on chessboard'. Slick referred to psychedelic music as a means of escaping the hegemonic power of government and corporation. This seems a somewhat over inflated claim for something that was primarily entertainment. It seems a little far fetched to think that many of the original consumers of this music caught that reference. Nevertheless 'White Rabbit' is a well constructed arrangement of musical ingredients fusing Bolero with syncopated bass and drums and Middle-East sounding guitar. Like the counterculture itself, acid rock was a borrowing of many cultures and a celebration of multi-culturalism in the forming of the self.

In the 1960s, the changing composition of the lyric, the potential for multiple arrangements, types of sequencing and organisational frameworks signalled the potential for multiple subjective roles and the freed creative mind. Conceptual creativity and originality were key ingredients in the formation of this subcultural discourse which realigned cultural processes and roles:

> Composition is a process of organisation...As long as you can conceptualise what that organizational process is you can be a 'composer'- in any medium you want. You can be a video composer, a film composer, a choreography composer, a social engineering composer. (Zappa 1989: 139)

Rock music heralded the possibility for structural and organisational change not only in music but across society and was accordingly touted as an instrument for change, as,

> ...one of the most vital revolutionary forces in the West- it blows people all the way back to their senses and makes them feel good, like they're alive again in the middle of this monstrous funeral parlour of western

civilization...Rock and roll music is a weapon of cultural revolution. (Sinclair[8] quoted in Swingrover 2004: 43)

Not only was acid rock endorsed by the cultural revolutionaries of the time such as White Pantherite, John Sinclair but it also stimulated considerable interest in the mainstream press such as *Newsweek*:

> ...the San Francisco Sound is the newest adventure in rock 'n roll. It's a raw, unpolished, freewheeling, vital and compelling sound. (quoted in Sculatti & Seay 1985: 99)

Of course, this was a music that was in the main produced by and for white America.

The difficulty for rock music was that it existed within the organisational framework of the music industry. For it to cause the demolition of existing social structures, rock music would necessarily have to exist outside traditional means of production and consumption. Whilst this was achieved to a limited extent by Haight-Ashbury bands such as The Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane, both achieving a measure of artistic autonomy, the overall organisation of rock music remained fixed and dependent upon the conventional practice of music as commerce. For other more politically overt bands such as Country Joe and the Fish, their ideals came at the expense of success. As Friedlander (1996) comments,

> In spending more time pursuing political causes, donating time and money, the band had less time to devote to promoting its career. By living their ideals they partly sacrificed their careers. (Friedlander 1996: 203)

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[8] John Sinclair was manager of the Detroit political rock outfit the MC5.

Rock music of the sixties was unable to achieve complete self-sovereignty as it was

an inseparable component of the burgeoning media apparatus. Located within the

context of twentieth century popular music, rock may be understood as both an

instrument and dependent of the media of mass dissemination:

> ...the meaning of popular music this century is inseparable from its use by the
> other mass media – radio, cinema, TV, video – so their organization and
> regulation shape the possibilities of pop. (Frith 1988: 5)

Accordingly, whilst rock broadcast themes of rebellion and delinquency, these could

be inferred as less real world exhortations and more youthful, neo-utopian

representations or styles. Outside the small Haight-Ashbury collective of musicians[9],

the rock fraternity did not inhabit the streets or live up to the ideological demands of

the countercultural lyric. The culture of eccentricity, historically associated with San

Francisco proved difficult to replicate elsewhere, with the exception of one other

bohemian enclave, Greenwich Village. Previous successful countercultures such as

the Beats matched with a climate of political activism (stimulated by the campus at

Berkeley) and a number of ballroom venues made San Francisco a peculiar place

where a symbiotic relationship between audience and performer flourished (Starr

1973).

In event, the potential for rock as an artistic medium for social change lay less in the

articulation of a distinctly separate and autonomous social state but as a distinctly

modern and revolutionary form of cultural expression.

> ...it was the unabashed commerciality of rock which gave rise to the hope that
> it would be a 'revolutionary' cultural form of expression. (Heylin 1992: 476)

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[9] Even bands such as Haight-Ashbury natives the Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane would come
under the control of the major record companies, Warner Bros and RCA, respectively.

I argue that rock music displays an indirect aesthetic 'authenticity'; an 'authenticity' which sees it less as the perpetrator of an independent social space and more as the expression of it. This is representative 'authenticity' whereby rock secures an aesthetic legitimacy as a medium of dialogical and expressive interaction. As Keightley (2001) argues music is 'authentic' in as much as it makes authorship and autonomy clear. Accordingly, it is misguided to abandon it as a vehicle for cultural debate or as an artistic form because of its commerciality. Bob Dylan's contractual relationship to big league Columbia Records hardly diminishes the cultural and artistic value stored in his catalogue of albums. Bob Dylan however provides a cogent example of how autonomy is complicated. Dylan is self-conceived as an artist who adopted and assimilated the style, performance and topical orientation of previous folk musicians most especially Woody Guthrie and made these his own (Dylan 2004). Dylan offers a lucid example of cultural *bricolage*, which is not to suggest that his music is any the less 'authentic' as the many covers of his songs by groups such as The Byrds and Peter, Paul and Mary.

I argue that Dylan achieved autonomy and 'authenticity' in addressing and popularising previously proscribed themes – ballads about racist murders (*The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll*), cold war ideology (*Masters of War/A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall/With God On Our Side*), McCarthyist paranoia (*Talkin' John Birch Paranoid Blues*), the countercultural zeitgeist (*The Times They Are A Changin'*), and even America's paternal misconstrual of its young (*Ballad of a Thin Man*). It seems misjudged to devalue these musical statements on the grounds of commerciality. I argue that such music be understood and engaged less as the conclusion of corporate enterprise and more the context of artistic expression. Alternatively it is more helpful

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to analyse rock music as a commercial product which signifies authentic cultural concerns. Its popularisation and permeation within the mass society has caused for the proliferation of multiple subcultural tribes evidenced as hard rock, metal and punk. Yet these musical subdivisions are themselves prone to what Negus (1999: 492) identifies as 'intervened realities' and 'the division of social life into constructed "markets"'. These markets however are not exclusively formed and controlled by agents of corporate power but other cultural gatekeepers.

In this instance rock music becomes ever more 'authentic' in an open and honest admittance of its commerciality. It does not flatter to deceive. It can provide a lyrical realism. This has increasingly become the case with rock's progress since the 1960s and the advent of stadium rock in the 1980s epitomised by artists such as Madonna, Michael Jackson and Bruce Springsteen.

Bruce Springsteen provides a useful example of the interface between rock and commerce and the insecurity of the claim for authenticity. Springsteen has an outward, performed persona as a troubadour of blue collar America, clad in jeans and baseball cap with a narrative of the everyday (Guterman 2005). At the same time he is an astute and wealthy businessman. Springsteen like Dylan belongs to Columbia Records. The point is not that Springsteen is hypocritical or a fake. He is an honest articulation of what rock music is and more importantly as Goodman (1998) suggests what rock music says:

> ...he stands for the core values of rock and roll even as those values of rock and roll become harder and harder to sustain. At a time when rock is the soundtrack for TV commercials, when tours depend on sponsorship deals, when video promotion has blurred the lines between music-making and music-selling, Springsteen suggests that despite everything, it still gives people a way

> to define themselves against corporate logic, a language in which everyday
> hopes and fears can be expressed. (Frith 1988: 97)

In this instance rock succeeds as an expression and celebration of the everyday. In

such a way it has become a type of carnival and an inversion of hierarchy. The

Springsteen model of rock music is a conscious celebration of the ordinary.

Springsteen's rock shares the same democratic appeal as early opera (DeCurtis 1992).

It is music for and of the people. It is not intended to be divisive, nor stratified

(though is often assigned as such by the music critic). Music in this instance

represents an invaluable homologous component from which a cultural tribe finds

guidance, meaning and value. As a reflexive expression of the mundane and

commonplace, rock music offers a narrative that frames social life, yet is not so much

desultory as an affirmation and celebration of it. Much like the work of the Pop Art

School, who critically venerated objects of mass production (most famously a tin of

Campbell's soup), rock music inverts social and cultural hierarchy through, for one,

the valorisation of the blue-collar American male. The music of the sixties

counterculture managed in a similar way to turn the ordinary into the extraordinary;

with a little help from marijuana and LSD. Countercultural music was decisive in the

formation of the Haight-Ashbury community neo-tribe and the culturation of a shared

meaning and purpose.

The 'ordinariness' of rock elicits a major problem. Firstly, as a musical form

conscious of its mass appeal and consumption, rock's status as an artistic entity

recedes, as does its potential for social critique. The media saturation of sixties

counterculture, caused in no small part by the Yippies, had much the same affect.

Secondly, as a product of mass production, rock is distanced from its original practice

as live performance. It is more frequently approached through its second life as a

recording.

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Stumway (1992) argues at that the point of rock's insertion into the mainstream it

becomes as much a commodity as the blue jeans and motorcycle jackets which

epitomise it. Ironically this is the instance of its mass adoration, the beginnings of a

cult of celebrity and the point at which in revulsion, other neo-tribes emerge in

resistance to a commercial takeover. This is also the time when,

> Songs and singers are fetishized, made magical, and we can only reclaim them
> through possession, via a cash transaction in the market place. (Frith 1988: 12)

The next section considers how rock exists as a cultural aesthetic. This is framed by

Bourdieu's theory of cultural production.

6.6 Rock within the Sociology of Art

This section contains a critique of rock music within the context of Bourdieu's theory of cultural production (1969, 1980). Rock music is considered as an inter-relational cultural scheme accessed not only by fans (Frith 1981; Grossberg 1984a) but a wider, unpartisan audience. This section also measures the claims of music and cultural theorists and rock intelligentsia: rock critics and biographers, who elevate rock music beyond Adorno's ([1941] 1991) dismissal of mass culture as degenerate; and as a cultural form distinct from pop.

In a society of 'spectacle', the accumulation of prestige surrounding a cultural construct is the barometer by which it is attributed value. This is a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1973) or cultural currency which facilitates a transcendence from construct to aesthetic. My own understanding of the hierarchy of cultural artefacts is informed by the theses of Williams' (1958) 'superior reality' and Bourdieu's (1969) 'autonomous creative genius'. Regev (1994) argues that a cultural artefact becomes an artistic form when three specific conditions are met: *aesthetic cultivation and authenticity* or that with 'philosophical, social, psychological or emotional meanings', *embodiment* indicating genuineness and finally *origination* via an 'inner truth', or 'the ideological theme of "art for art's sake"' (Regev 1994: 86).

Rock music's position within this developmental framework is highly problematic not least as a product and process of mass consumer culture which is complicit with the production values of capitalist profit. Nonetheless, this chapter demonstrates that the rock musicians of the sixties counterculture were arguably no less committed to the ideology and ambition of autonomous art than other creative artisans. I situate this

neo-tribe of rock musicians as cultural aesthetes who were consciously aware of their place within the consumer culture. One need look no further than The Mothers of Invention's *We're Only In It for the Money*.

Serious academic, especially sociological, attention to music (other than the classical genres) began with Adorno. Exiled to the USA he wrote disparagingly of the American popular musics of the 1930s. His distaste for the music led him to condemn it as aesthetically moribund and complicit with a commercially oriented culture industry. Rock music too, has suffered from a similar pejorative depiction yet I argue that this is somewhat outmoded and naïve. This is an essentialism which misses the nuance and subtext of rock music as a cultural paradigm that oscillates between culture and commerce and problematises the theses of 'authenticity' and incorporation.

Rock is a musical oeuvre of mass consumption which can depict the everyday and ordinary, Springsteen is perhaps the most obvious example of this. Yet rock's aesthetic and artistic value lies with its potential to transcend the repetition and tedium of everyday life whilst replicating and celebrating it:

> Rock is produced by and for a population already living in everyday life, but it is always about the possibility of transcending the specific configuration of everyday life within which it is active. (Grossberg 1993: 23)

Subversiveness and authenticity are integral discourses determining the extent to which rock occurs as an artistic form. These discourses accompanied the popularisation of rock within the post-war landscape and served as a means of articulating youth's dislocation from the paternal (Grossberg 1984). The legitimacy of rock music as an artistic form is however consistently threatened by the potential for

its co-optation into a commercial product. Commercialism is responsible for its attenuation as a signifier of rebellion. This is the incorporation thesis which suggests that rock music's capitalist overtones diminish its claims of cultural authenticity and 'the subordination of its original social meanings to the interests of the music industry and hegemonic culture' (Regev 1994: 88). Ironically, authenticity and subversiveness translate as principal motifs facilitating rock's commercial appeal.

Rock music is caught between its situation as a product of mass culture and as a negation of it. It is at once a member of the capitalist commodity fetish (Adorno [1941] 1991) and a post-modern cultural fragment that as a structural aesthetic, avoids contextualisation and assimilation into the corpus of capitalist ritualism (Grossberg 1984). Rock music is complicated by being at once a tangible commodity form and amorphous cultural fragment. Peterson (1976) stressed how culture is 'fabricated' by a range of occupational groups within specific social milieu. He argued that 'organisational structures' and 'production systems' are responsible for the 'inauthentication' of cultural aesthetics. In an examination of country music, Peterson (1997) uncovered a process of institutionalisation involving a complex of people in an ironically knowing task of 'fabricating authenticity'. He claimed that any discussion of authenticity must consider the structural arrangement within which innovators work. The rock innovator is arguably slightly different as a conscious borrower of musical idiom and style. The producers of rock thus openly fabricate a performance of authenticity. Bob Dylan as the imitation of Woody Guthrie's dust bowl balladeer is a prime example of this.

Rock represents a struggle waged between capitalist incorporation and

institutionalization and the preservation of an anti-hegemonic culture of resistance.

Cultural theorist, Grossberg (1984) suggests that,

> ...the power of rock and roll lies in its practice of 'excorporation', operating at
> and reproducing the boundary between youth culture and the dominant
> culture. Rock and roll reverses the hegemonic practices of incorporation...[it]
> removes signs, objects, sounds, styles, etc. from their apparently meaningful
> existence within the dominant culture and relocates them within an affective
> alliance of differentiation and resistance. (Grossberg [1984] 1997: 481).

When Lefebvre (1984: 19) speculates as to whether music can 'express the secret

nature of everyday life, or compensates, on the contrary, for its triviality and

superficiality', I suggest the answer is both. Rock music may be both a source of

capitalist oppression and a means of liberal recreation. Rock's youth derived and

orientated parlance, littered with the rhetoric of freedom and revolution, exists in both

original and repackaged forms; with the latter most observable as a marketing ploy.

Caught within the matrix of dominant consumer culture, rock music's predication of

rebellion and otherness seems at first sight hypocritical and fraudulent. Yet, rock is

neither a total refutation of dominant culture (that which sustains it) nor does it

necessarily suggest a utopian negation (Grossberg 1984). Indeed,

> It plays with the very practice that the dominant culture uses to resist its
> resistance: incorporation and excorporation in a continuous dialectic that
> reproduces the very boundaries of existence. (Grossberg 1984: 481)

The rock music of the 1960s, pioneered by the likes of The Grateful Dead, Jefferson

Airplane and Frank Zappa, applied the ideology of autonomous art with some success.

Indeed in locating rock music within the sociology of art, the 1960s is massively

important in both making the distinction between the authentic and commercial and

blurring it:

What did open up in a clear way in the late 1960s and early 1970s was a new divide between what was perceived to be the more serious and, somehow more 'authentic' rock music and 'commercial' pop music. (Longhurst 1995: 108-109)

Frank Zappa provides one of the most iconic and idiosyncratic examples of a rock 'n roll artisan who freely admitted to his precariousness at the intersection of rock and commerce. I provide an extended treatment of this in due course.

West coast American rock acts (The Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother and the Holding Company, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Moby Grape) established a celebrated repertory of musical styles and work. These are the *habitus* of the San Franciscan rock form, a collection of specific musical practices which made up its aesthetic. More explicitly and generically, the rock aesthetic is the culmination of a back catalogue of musicians and music begun in the late fifties with the white co-optation of black rhythm and blues[10]. Rock music's permeation, indeed saturation of popular music culture[11], and its ability to, in some measure, meet the preconditions as a valid artistic form, is demonstrative of its importance as a dramaturgical method for (counter)cultural dissemination. Furthermore such popularization suggests its significance as a homologous agent and realm from which the 1960s counterculture and subsequent subcultures are contextualised.

In a critique of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) theory of subculture, Redhead (1990) claims that alternative youth culture is not so efficiently interconnected nor self-originating as the former claims.

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[10] Or as Grossberg ([1984] 1997: 480) claims 'a synthesis of blues and white hill-billy music'
[11] In 1972, rock music accounted for 80% of the music produced in the United States (Chapple and Garofalo)

> 'Authentic' subcultures were produced by subcultural theorists, not the other way around. In fact, popular music and 'deviant' youth styles never fitted together as harmoniously as some subcultural theory proclaimed. (Redhead 1990: 25)

In a similar way the 'authenticity' of rock music is determined not by its pioneers but by those who provide a commentary. These are a 'larger group of critics, scholars and fans of popular music who subscribe to the belief that the music of the Beatles, Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones and Jimi Hendrix- to name but the obvious examples- constitutes 'real art' (Regev 1994: 86). This suggests an explicit separation between the producer and consumer and the predominance of the latter in evaluating and coding authenticity. However I argue in line with Marcus and Fischer (1986) that,

> ...not only is the cultural construction of meaning and symbols inherently a matter of political and economic interests, but the reverse also holds – the concerns of political economy are inherently about conflicts over meanings and symbols. (Marcus & Fischer 1986: 85)

Rock music may be understood as produced from the bottom-up. Like rap music a distinction is drawn between what Negus (1999) terms as 'the street' and the 'executive suite'. In a similar way, West Coast Rock was the music of the urban street and the 'sound of the city' (Gillet 1970); the San Francisco Sound.

Arguably, rock's most celebrated incarnation was that of the 1960s; which as an epoch of modern popular music represents a model of production which extolled amateurism, creative autonomy and organic creation. Its persistence as a profitable commodity in the contemporary music marketplace is what ensures its artistic status and gives rise to the music connoisseur:

> The boxed sets, bootlegged live albums, and innumerable variations of classic albums issued by major labels deepen and solidify the presence of that canon, perpetuating a sense of that canon as monumental. (Straw 2001: 72)

The 1960s provides a model of rock music that corresponds to an artistic form which disseminated a genuine desire to be *other*, to be alternative, to be subversive and to do so beyond mere signification. The San Francisco Sound and the psychedelic tribe had much in common with the spontaneity, impulsiveness and self-indulgence of Beat literature and free-style jazz (Unterberger 2003). Psychedelia was uninhibited, inchoate but entirely volitional (or at least this is how it is remembered) (Selvin 1999).

The rock critics that are responsible for the commentary of contemporary styles of this musical genus are in decline. Those whose work is a critique of the vintage model survive, indeed are flourishing.

> ...it's no coincidence that, just as record sales are plummeting, so the music press is in perilous decline. *The New Musical Express*, despite now having the field to itself as a British rock weekly, is selling fewer copies than ever. (The flipside: *Mojo*, covering the best music from the era when rock still mattered, continues to hold its own.) (Hoskyns 2003: xi)

Hoskyns, himself a rock writer and editor, shows not only how the critic can shape the legitimacy of a musical milieu[12], but also that the rock music associated with the 1960s continues to hold the strongest cultural currency and relevance. This is certainly the case when compared to 21st century pop culture which Hoskyns (2003: x) refers to as, 'an endless parade of pneumatic automatons who signify and celebrate nothing other than their own narcissism and greed'. An out-of-hand dismissal of contemporary rock culture on the other hand is the same underestimation and generalisation committed by Adorno. The contemporary rock culture of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century has its own intrinsic value, though one which in all probability will only be acknowledged in years to come, when theory and

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[12] Hoskyns calls the 21st century pop culture, 'an endless parade of pneumatic automatons who signify and celebrate nothing other than their own narcissism and greed'. (Hoskyns 2003: x)

critique assign a value system and hierarchy currently unobtainable. The adjudicators of this are the antithesis of the average rock audience. Those which assign or verify the cultural integrity of rock are the elite of popular culture, the connoisseurs of this genus of music. Even within a post-modern age, which I situate from the late twentieth century onwards, where the distinction between high and low art is said to have collapsed, cultural stratification persists. Nonetheless, it is appropriate that any assessment of authenticity consider the interface of production and consumption as the point by which cultural forms are made visible and known.

> It is a commonplace that production and consumption are interdependent. Without production of material or cultural goods, there can be no consumption. Without a demand for, and consumption of, the use-value embodied in these goods, there is no impetus for continuing production. (Laing 1990: 186)

Whilst this focus on the production and consumption of rock music is a common factor in the determination of 'authenticity', it also furthers the claims of the 'incorporation' thesis. My claim is that the two sit parallel; that the assignment of cultural 'authenticity' occurs within a commercial framework. The cultural aesthetic and cultural commodity co-exist. Furthermore, revisiting the thesis of Willis (1978), rock music exists as the pre-eminent component in the formation and structuring of the hippie subcultural enclave. Rock music was the principal strategy from which a neo-tribe formed. Sixties rock, as framed within rock journalism, is also the model against which all modern imitations draw (often unfavourable) comparisons.

The next section considers how rock as a cultural artefact is complicated as an exemplar of modernism and technology and pre-modernism and the pastoral.

6.7 Modernism/Technology and the Authentic/Pastoral

Another antagonism complicating rock's claim of 'authenticity' is its privileging of the body and of social and cultural liminality against a celebration of modernism. Schwarz (1997: 98) suggests that rock music is in fact a modernist discourse, a 'glorification of technology in musical instruments and sound systems...the urge to find increasingly 'new' sounds, forms of expression that surpass antecedents'. Yet such technology belongs to a scientific progressivism which is far removed from the almost Luddite inclinations of the pastoral counterculturalist. Rock as electric and harnessed by technology not only represented the success of modernism but its succession from folk (Bennett 2003).

When Bob Dylan converted from folk to rock and first *plugged-in* he was greeted with outrage from an audience who saw this as the betrayal and defilement of folk music. On Dylan's tour of the United Kingdom in 1966 this was emphatically apparent. At what has been dubbed the 'Royal Albert Hall[13]' concert, the tension between rock artists as producer and audience as consumer, and an antipathy towards rock, was fully exposed

> "JUDAS!" The taunt was loud, from the back of the hall. People applauded the heckler, Keele University student Keith Butler. He was upset that Bob has taken songs like "One Too Many Mornings" from acoustic albums and performed them now in a radically different style. "I don't believe you", retorted Bob, strumming the opening chords of "Like a Rolling Stone". Then he became angry, retorting with vehemence: "You're a LIAR!" Bob turned to The Hawks. As they began the song, he exhorted them to "play fuckin' loud" (Sounes 2001: 213)

In this instance technology flattened the protests of those inclined towards the simplicity of folk music. Such protest did little however to hamper the juggernaut of

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[13] This is now known to have occurred at the Manchester Free Trade Hall, May 17th 1966.

electric rock. As a former folk balladeer, Dylan not only turned folk music on its head by his use of amplified instrumentation but by signifying stardom, packaging and promotion, the very antithesis of the folk paradigm (Frith, Straw & Street 2001). Dylan accordingly is a prime example of an artist attaining creative autonomy within corporate enterprise. Frith, Straw and Street (2001) claim that,

> ...nobody else has written such an astonishing variety of songs; and there's no one who has been such a loved star while remaining so true to the bohemian ideal of being beholden to nothing but oneself. (Frith, Straw & Street 2001: 81)

Of course this is a carefully cultivated image. The culture of twentieth century bohemian art and music was inescapably constructed; taking its inspiration from fictionalised representations of bohemia in the nineteenth century such as Murger's (1846) *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème.*

Technology was used by the early pioneers of rock in a progressive fashioning of new, modern social spaces. Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters offer a prime example of how technology was used beyond musical experimentation in opening up unusual social spaces:

> Kesey used tape and tape manipulation for a more radical purpose than making electronic music or documenting events. He wanted to disrupt ordinary reality, to make people aware that they were living in a kind of existential movie, *the moment.* (Pinch & Trucco 2002: 93).

Technology also allowed a return to a pre-social, corporeal centrality of the self. Rock's harnessing of technology allowed for new sonic landscapes, built around the electric guitar, amplifier, the synthesizer, microphone and magnetic tape; and accordingly a new subcultural zone. Of all these instruments the electric guitar is arguably most iconic and operates as the embodiment of rock and extension of the rock musician. Its popularity, which doubled during 1940 and 1959, (Ryan and

Peterson 2001) emerged through its affordability, portability and ease of mastery

(Chambers 1985) contributing to the amateurism and lines of creative consumption

and production.

In addition to the guitar the synthesiser was an instrument of great significance to the

evolution of rock music. It was first pioneered by Don Buchla (the Buchla Box) in

radical 1960s San Francisco and Robert Moog (the Moog synthesiser) in New York.

Pinch and Trucco (2002) argue that,

> Bob Moog and Don Buchla are not as well-known as Bill Gates of Microsoft
> or Steve Jobs of Apple Computers. But working at a similar time from small
> storefronts and garages, they too produced an electronic revolution – in the
> way music is produced and consumed. (Pinch & Trucco 2002: 10)

The synthesiser was a key facet of the San Francisco psychedelic sound, harnessed to

full effect by The Grateful Dead in *Anthem of the Sun* (1968) and *Aoxomoxoa* (1969).

Don Buchla was similarly a key contributor to Kesey's Trips Festival stimulating new

social configurations through technological multi-media:

> ...perched on a big tower in the center of the hall was Don Buchla running his
> Buchla Box – making electronic sounds, processing the sounds of the bands,
> running slide shows and light shows from the Buchla Box, and keeping all the
> electronics of the Trips Festival going. (Pinch & Trucco 2002: 97)

As a principal component of psychedelia the synthesizer was in some respects the

engine of the Acid Tests and Trips Festival and consequently the Haight-Ashbury.

Wolfe (1989: 223) considers that the, 'Acid Tests were the epoch of the psychedelic

style and practically everything that has gone into it'. Psychedelia represented a major

electronic experience and a new type of interaction with sound and the reframing of

social relationships. It also pointed towards the dawning of the digital age and the

emergence of Silicon Valley. Brightman (1998) notes that one latterly prominent Acid

Tests reveller, Steve Jobs, was future co-founder and CEO of Apple Computers. The

development and use of instruments such as the *Buchla Box* and *Moog* synthesizer

effectively altered the rules of music production and consumption leading to: 'a

digital world where sounds are produced in bits on digital computers and processors.

Digital synthesizers and a new instrument, the digital sampler, are commonplace in

today's music' (Pinch & Trucco 2002: 316).

As an electrified form of music, rock is conceptualised as the source of life, of

movement and of energy itself epitomised by Country Joe and the Fish's 1967 album,

Electric Music for the Mind and Body. Electricity is a key theme framing the

American teenager of the 1960s and his own 'line of flight' from paternalistic

platitudes. This is perhaps most vividly captured on the soundtrack of the 1969 film,

Easy Rider, a cinematic adventure into the vastness of America. The song, 'Born to

Be Wild' by rock group Steppenwolf plays alongside the image of two motorbike

outlaws. It provides a conscious celebration of how technology, as a 'motor running'

enables a route to the heart of knowing; both the self and America. Indeed, Denisoff

and Romanowski (1991: 169) suggest that the soundtrack for *Easy Rider* is used

'carefully as musical commentary throughout the picture' to illustrate the intimate

relationship between song lyrics and the countercultural zeitgeist.

Technology is not only representative of the advance of Western capitalism but the

advance of certain cultural institutions and the arrival of the post-modern self. In the

sixties, technology allowed people of the world to coalesce. In 1967, the Beatles

performed the first live international television broadcast, with 'All You Need is

Love'. In this instance rock music not only appropriated technology for its own

dissemination but was in itself representative of technology's ascent. At this point

rock music became global.

> In 1968, *Life* called the new rock music, "the first music born in the age of
> instant communication". (Kurlansky 2005: 182)

This was not lost on Beat sage and countercultural statesman, Allen Ginsberg who

announced his desire to transform San Francisco into 'an electric Tibet' (Lee and

Shlain 1985: 176).

Music of the 1960s counterculture represented a sonic response to the anxiety of a

nuclear age. Electric rock's amplifiers, electronic keyboards and *Moog* synthesizers

distracted from and drowned out the fear of nuclear holocaust whilst imitating it with

a fusion of other sonic effects. Commentating on the *Buchla* box, predecessor to the

Moog Synthesiser, Pinch and Trucco (2002) detail how,

> Explosions, sirens and rockets were some of the easiest sounds to create on the
> early synthesizers. But many other effects, like insect noises, bird song and
> space sounds were also now possible from this little box. And when the
> audience was "stoned out of its gourds" the experience could be
> overpowering. (Pinch & Trucco 2002: 101)

Electronic music was a means to vent all the frustration and pent up aggression of

youth. It provided, importantly, a means for inter-communication and an identity for

youth which signified a rupture with the past. Rock music symbolised the present and

the future but most emphatically the dismissal of the past. For the hippie

counterculture the key musical breakthrough was the release of the Beatles' *Sergeant*

Pepper's Lonely Heart Club Band (1967).

> This marked the break up of the old musical patterns and the old patterns of
> commercial management. For the first time groups has artistic self-
> determination. They could really play what they wanted. (Willis 1978: 107)

With creative self-determination, rock musicians attempted to forge less a product

bound by the demands of commerciality and more an artistic medium to facilitate

alternative forms of expression that resisted and transcended dominant cultural

discourse. It is useful and important now to make a full assessment of how technology

complicates cultural 'authenticity'.

6.8 Technology and the Diminution of Authenticity

The evolution of the rock sound and the contestation of its authenticity have

much, if not all to do, with technological innovation.

> ...the history of rock is a consequence of the development of recording
> technology (and, to some extent, television and video), just as the history of
> jazz is a consequence of radio...Stated differently, radio was the prosthesis of
> jazz, just as magnetic tape was the prosthesis of rock and roll. (Frith 1988:
> 171-172)

Rock music exists as a product of technological invention and product of mass

communication. Its efficacy as a model of collective cultural expression is dependent

upon the technology which allows its distribution. Without technology there could be

no means of its recording and distribution. The production and dissemination of rock

music is determined by the interface of specialist technological devices such as the

electric guitar, Moog, microphone, multi-track recorder, recording studio, vinyl,

compact disc and digital download and the media institutions which frame and situate

it for the consumer (Negus 1996).

> The equipment and institutions of the mass media have become the direct
> social preconditions for the existence of rock music: the musical sound-shape
> becomes possible and meaningful only in symbiosis with the technology and
> institutions of mass communication. (Wicke 1982: 236)

Whilst technological progress initially proferred rock artists such as The Grateful

Dead and Frank Zappa a space to experiment with a variety of new musical styles,

structures and formats it eventually privileged recording over performance (Frith

1988, Gracyk 1996). Accordingly, as a product of recording, rock was commodified

and standardised. Frith (1988) claims that,

> In elevating recording above performance, rock created a condition of
> perpetual conventionalization. (Frith 1988: 176)

Such conventionalization generated an aesthetic hierarchy and the emergence of the rock standard or classic rock. General consensus situates much of the rock music of the 1960s as forming the rock standard; the summit of rock's artistic capabilities and originality from which other mutations of popular music imitate and follow (Regev 1992). In this instance the record has a binary yet antagonistic function. Firstly it memorialises and consecrates 1960s rock assigning it artistic value. Secondly it extends its commercialism and permeation into the mass culture thus reducing its artistic status. Mowitt (1996) suggests that,

> The recording studio is a cultural facility whose existence testifies to the technological advances that made the present priority of cultural consumption over cultural production possible. (Mowitt 1996: 227)

The recording studio as such facilitates the (re)configuration of collective memory. It provides a sonic trajectory back to the 1960s which apprehends better perhaps than any other historical account a return. The rock recordings of this era, not only make the social and cultural contexts of the 1960s readily identifiable but allow the listener to either reapproach or first meet these. Every time *Rubber Soul*[14] is spun on a turntable, compact disc player or *i-pod*, it evokes and harnesses a collective memory for those who remember its first release and creates new associations for those who experience it for the first time (Lipsitz 1990). Accordingly *Rubber Soul* behaves as an historical artefact, which as the soundtrack to the Haight-Ashbury summer of 1965, effectively disseminates,

> ...an "authentic" expression of pleasure, fun negation, refusal and subversiveness – in relation to the "straight" world of structured, routine and expected activities...(Regev 2002: 2)

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[14] Rubber Soul was the Beatles' sixth album, released in 1965.

Frith (1981) claims that the act of listening is itself performative and one of the most authentic expressions and experiences of music.

The veneration of 1960s rock, by the rock intelligentsia as a vital cultural and artistic form, coupled with its infiltration of mass culture, affords it a permanency and relevancy today:

> ...especially for those social and generational groups which have crystallized around these meanings and through them. (Regev 2000: 2)

The rock records of the 1960s are perhaps the supreme manifestation of countercultural expression; and for the researcher the most direct and comprehensive route of capturing history. Materialised as compact disc or download, rock music enjoys longevity. It continues to be useful as an articulation of the social and cultural experience of youth. Lyrics that talk about 'My Generation', and the people who 'try to put us to the test', are as relevant now in the discourse of youth's rebellion from the parental, 'why don't they all just fade', as ever[15]. One other interesting trend occurs as sixties rock music, particularly that belonging to the Haight-Ashbury, is recycled as music defined by critics and marketers as neo-hippie or neo-psychedelia. Some notable bands include *Blind Melon* (1991-1995); *Grandaddy* (1992- 2006); *Mercury Rev* (1984- present); *Screaming Trees* (1985- 2000); *The Bees* (2001- present); *The Dandy Warhols* (1993- present); *The Flaming Lips* (1983- present); *The Polyphonic Spree* (2000-present) and *The Shins* (1997- present). Similarly psychedelic culture reappeared in Britain in the late 1980s when L.S.D, the drug ecstasy and electronic dance music fused to create *Acid House* and a 'Second Summer of Love' (Reynolds 1998).

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[15] Lyrics from 'My Generation' a 1965 hit for British Rock act 'The Who'.

The authenticity of rock is not so much determined or rather, undermined, by a struggle with its mass popularity (and commerciality) but uses mass consumption as a means of asserting its legitimacy. Rock is thus aesthetically legitimized through mass consumption. An alternative and viable claim for rock's authenticity is made through the positive adaptation and inversion of the incorporation thesis. In this instance I argue that rock succeeds as a legitimate and celebrated cultural form whilst existing within the framework of capitalist incorporation. Gatekeepers of the culture industry from artists to critics, work through corporate channels to invent, disseminate and reinvent music as an authentic cultural expression. Accordingly the capitalist producer is approached as a primary contributor to the assignation of rock within a hierarchy of cultural forms and traditions. The mass production and consumption of music is as such an absolute prerequisite for its continued significance as a valued form of cultural expression. Music theorist Wicke (1982) argues that,

> ...the masses, in addition to their previous economic character as producers and consumers, have become a necessary precondition of music. (Wicke 1982: 232)

I argue that the relationship between rock and commerce does not erode authenticity but actually stimulates new forms of cultural expression. The music industry has since rock's inception largely presided as its dominant framework. Whilst technological development has increased the autonomy and independence of the recording artist with portable and home recording studios, cost-free online distribution and promotion epitomised by artists such as the Arctic Monkeys[16], recording labels continue to exert a considerable influence. Rock music belongs to a tightly regulated and managed, multi-layered industry of record companies, music press, fashion designers and music

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[16] The Arctic Monkeys, are signed to Domino one of the longest running and most successful independent record labels in the United Kingdom. Other high profile signings include Will Oldham, Franz Ferdinand and The Kills.

video channels (Gracyk 1996), the final product of the rock record can be understood in its own right and recontextualised by the creative subjective experience of the listener (Frith 1981). It may be contextualised as the beginning and end of the music industry, an exhibition of culture and facilitator of new cultural styles. Certain polemicists of the music industry claim that business convention subjugates and thus excoriates music's cultural value and potential:

> The most fragile thing to maintain in our culture is an underground. No sooner does a new tribe of rebels skip out, flip out, trip out, and take its stand, than photographers from Life-Look are on the scene doing cover layout. No sooner is a low rent, low harassment quarter discovered than it appears in eight colour spreads on America's breakfast table. (Goldstein 1992: 154)

This is basis for the constant evolution of rock music which as an artistic form, like other genres such as film, follows the carnivalesque pattern of death and rebirth, and a pattern of constant reinvention. Within a commercial framework, mass appeal and mainstreaming cause the dissolution of artistic integrity, rock's mark of fashion, of being 'cool' and 'of the moment', and affects its reinvention.

Rock music is accordingly situated within a cycle of constant rejuvenation, caught between co-option and globalisation, authenticity and anonymity. From this position a myriad of subcultural neo-tribes become tenable. The American 'rock' counterculture of the 1960s may be understood accordingly as one such small, fragmentary yet dramatic stage of American youth's cultural evolution. It furthermore represents a precursor to the lineage of late twentieth century American youth and music subcultures. The antagonistic relationship between rock and commerce is that which equally supports and decimates it, which makes it global or indeed glocal. As such the music of Bruce Springsteen transported from New Jersey to London, despite geographical and cultural variation and distance, occurs as the same cultural artefact.

This theme also features as the distinction between the recorded and live as global and

local respectively. In the instance of the 1960s and the burgeoning mass media,

commerce transported rock and its culture into the public sphere:

> Thanks to the modern mass media...notions which had been the currency of
> tiny groups were percolating through the vast demographics of the baby boom.
> *Life*, *Time* and the trendspotters of the evening news outdid themselves
> trumpeting the new youth culture. As with the Beats, the cultural panic spread
> the news that American youth en masse were abandoning the stable routes of
> American society and striking out into unprecedented trials (or into
> unprecedented thickets). (Gitlin 1993: 236)

6.9 Formation of a Rock Collective: Togetherness, Adhesive Love & Fantasy Cities

This section details how neo-tribes are formed through the consumption of rock music, leading to notions of social bonhomie and the creation of spaces of carnivalesque. Rock forms one part of the performance base and, as was certainly the case in the Haight Ashbury (alongside the use of hallucinogenic drugs), is integral to the formation of 'authentic' identity.

> The search for authenticity in the social and material world began at the end of the last century with newly industrialised countries having an unprecedented variety of goods, lifestyles and artistic expressions at their disposal. (Breidenbach & Zukrigl 2001: 12)

Rock music was one of these, serving to locate a sense of subjective legitimacy. It served as an important (dis)orientation device and mark of cultural distinction around which identity could form. Finnegan's (1989) study of music-making practices contributes to this claim:

> ...far from music-making taking a peripheral role for individuals and society- a view propagated in the kind of theoretical stance that marginalises 'leisure' or 'culture' as somehow less real than 'work' or 'society' – music can equally well be seen as playing a central part not just in urban networks but also more generally in the social structure and processes of our life today. (Finnegan 1989: 5-6)

Within a notion of collective performance it is clear to see why 710 Ashbury Street[17] assumed such importance for the local hip community of the 1960s. San Francisco Acid Rock was an important factor contributing towards a sense of togetherness and community for the counterculture.

> 'Together' expresses the relationship among people who feel themselves to be members of the same species, who are related to each other and to all of nature by the underlying order of being. People are 'together' when they experience

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[17] Home to the Grateful Dead.

> the same thing in the same way...A great throng can be together in a peace march or a rock festival; a small group can feel an intense sense of 'together' listening to a record or watching a sunset or a storm. Many aspects of the new culture help produce this feeling, music perhaps most universally (Reich 1972: 211)

The Bay Area musicians of the 1960s are particularly noted as active participants in the creation of this togetherness. Many of these such as the Grateful Dead and Big Brother and the Holding Company, were integral members of the community challenging the common held theme of the elite star set apart from his audience.

> Even though the Beatles and Stones, lived in London, they did so in mansions, isolated from the hoi polloi; many American rock artists did the same. However a large number of San Francisco's musicians resided in communal living situations...Members of the Dead lived at 710 Ashbury, Big Brother resided and practiced at 1090 Page, and the Airplane established their headquarters at the 2400 Fulton mansion. (Friedlander 1996: 191)

Similarly when many of the San Franciscan bands actually came to play at any of its numerous old ballrooms, there was no apparent division between audience and performer.

> Rather than an audience viewing the musician-elite from distant fixed seating, it became an active participant, a swarm of throbbing, psychedelic, whirling dervishes. (Friedlander 1996: 193)

Rock was the facilitator of kinship enabling a community in music. Akin to the folk music revival of the early 1960s, rock music harnessed the cultural and sometimes political. Within the rock community, music had a binary role in attaining an 'authentic "reflection of experience"' and serving as the lexicon of the body politic (Frith 1981). All hierarchical stratification collapsed as the interface between the producers of rock and their consumers was made fluid. This, of course, was within the context of live and not recorded experience and accordingly collective as opposed to individual consumption.

> ...the aim of rock music was from the start directed not at the experience of individuality but at the experience of collectivity. (Wicke 1982: 228)

Within the collective experience the Whitmanesque notion of 'adhesive love', what Gitlin (1987) claimed as the incandescent remedy to America's ills, could potentially flourish. The collective expression of 'adhesive love' was most prominently found in people *circles* where marijuana, LSD and rock music fused. In such circles American youth detached from the responsibilities and implications of adult life, living for the sheer exultant point of living. Critically however community building properties were not inherent to psychedelic music but were the result of the Haight communities' interaction with it. Accordingly 'music (whether folk or pop or rock) is not made by a community, but provides particular forms of communal experience' (Frith 1981: 164). This allows collective subjectivity to flourish and exist beyond temporal bounds such as the concert hall (Sardiello 1994). The expression of extended communities in music is best illustrated in band fan clubs and online fan sites, fanzines and discussion forums.

The Haight counterculture represented a postponement of adulthood, a Romantic, Dionysian vision where the magical properties of psychedelics and rock music evoked a peculiar utopian aesthetic, an eternal present and fractured past:

> Yes to dance beneath the diamond sky with one hand waving free, silhouetted by the sea, circled by the circus sands, with all memory and fate driven deep beneath the waves, let us forget about today until tomorrow. (Dylan 1964)[18]

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[18] *Mr. Tambourine Man*, Bringing It All Back Home (1964)

Whilst Dylan's *Tambourine Man* represented the lone cultural maverick 'disappearing through the smoke rings of my mind', the wider utopian ambition called on the hippie as a communard within the countercultural neo-tribe. Rock music and drugs were the principal countercultural means seen to coalesce American youth, diverting the course of the future, privileging the present and transforming the ordinary into the remarkable.

> The combination of a joint, the right company, and the right long playing record seemed to have redeemed the traditional Romantic promise, Blake's 'eternity in an hour' to see and feel truly the grain of the world, the steady miracle ordinarily muffled by busyness but still lurking in the interstices, a revelation of your astonishing existence in an electric universe. The everyday had been converted into the extraordinary. (Gitlin 1987: 203)

The American counterculture illustrated the concomitance of drugs and music in the creation of a subcultural strand, a relationship replicated in other subcultural tribes such as punk (Willis 1978) and new rave (Thornton 1995). These homologous constituents are that which frame and disseminate subculture.

Music provides subcultural identity, a bank of personal meaning, a vernacular of its own and an important addition to the mass society and mainstream as a complex web of production and consumption:

> Beyond its importance as a cultural pursuit music is captured, transformed and broadcast in a range of ways, involving complicated trajectories of production, distribution and consumption. (Connell & Gibson 2003: 6)

The music festival is a significant cultural space where such subcultural discourse is made visible and palpable. It is also as Bowen and Daniels (2005) claim the site for specific knowledge exchange, the performance of cultural identity, and two levels of socialisation, one en masse as macro and one with family and friends as micro. The festival is as such a part of what Kukathas (2003) describes as a 'Liberal

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Archipelago', with many different micro-societies occurring in each one. The contemporary array of music festival also indicates the heterogeneity of this cultural paradigm and network and the success and continuity of sub/counter-cultural dialogue.[19]

The festival as carnival is demonstrative of how subculture can, albeit fleetingly, survive as what Hannigan (2002) calls 'fantasy cities'. The Woodstock Music and Art Festival (1969) was one such 'fantasy city' where estimates of up to 500,000 revellers, placed it at the time as the second largest conurbation in New York State. Woodstock is important for me for two reasons. One, because it demonstrated the viability of an alternative subcultural space generated by music and two because it showed itself as a viable platform for politicised discourse. Furthermore it is significant as an event which has penetrated the imagination and language of the majority and global culture. It is a journalistic trope, a mark of fashion, an historical signpost, and marker of worth and size. I suggest that Woodstock '69 has become glocalised and evinces what Straw (2001) refers to as,

> ...global musical relations...shaped by centrifugal tendencies which send
> interest outward...lending to the unexpected global circulation of national
> styles and artefacts. (Straw 2001: 72)

As a subcultural space Woodstock succeeded as peaceful:

> The police and the festivals' promoters both expressed amazement that despite
> the size of the crowd- the largest gathering of its kind ever held- there had
> been neither violence nor any serious incident. (Fosburgh 1969: 31)

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[19] In the UK alone, WOMAD, Glastonbury, Greenman, Creamfields, Gatecrasher demonstrate the diversity of music festivals and their distinctive countercultural bent

It worked in securing the legitimisation of American youth as a significant cultural force. Whilst the financial backers eventually lost between one to two million dollars (Miles 2003), they were adamant that they had contributed,

> ...with deep pleasure [in creating] a great event in the development of a new American 'youth culture'. (Reeves 1969: 25)

The likes of Country Joe and the Fish and Jimi Hendrix offered another dimension to music which was less about getting high and more about the critique of hegemonic power. The karaoke styled sing-along of Country Joe's 'I Feel Like I'm Fixin To Die Rag', with its troubled preoccupation of 'What are we fighting for?' and Hendrix's distorted and feedback laced 'Star Spangled Banner' evidenced rock music in a festival format as a politicised discourse. Whilst Country Joe assailed America's involvement in Vietnam, Hendrix articulated the black man's marginalisation and impoverishment as an American outsider. The fact that Hendrix found fame in the UK and not the USA makes his claim even more disquieting. Nonetheless these contributions demonstrated that the music festival could work as a space for political discourse and education, and that rock music in many instances is a potent and versatile cultural signifier. Whilst a somewhat over-inflated and mythologizing claim, Hicks (1996) comments of Hendrix's Woodstock (1969) performance espouse the potency of a community-in-music and the resonance of its theatre:

> ...one man with one guitar said more in three and a half minutes about that particularly disgusting war and its reverberations than all the novels, memoirs and movies put together. (Hicks 1996: 195)

Subcultural communities such as the Haight-Ashbury forged around the rock music of The Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane interacted within a theatre of experience framework where dominant gendered and class roles and discourse were rejected; much to the alarm of white middle class, paternal America. Hippie men and women

grew their hair long and unkempt and wore it down (Miles 2003). Public space was no

longer gender specific nor dominated by men (Miller 1999). Sexual morality was

turned on its head as 'free love' and the female contraceptive redefined sexual

relations. The countercultural youth of sixties' America opted to be unlike their

parents. The communal squat, marijuana, LSD and rock music formed the principal

components to a new Dionysian morality (Echols 2002). Psychedelia however, as a

fusion of drugs and music, was as lead singer of Country Joe and the Fish, Joe

MacDonald, attests a distinctly arrested experience:

> ...when you're on drugs, you don't project. It's all inside you, your brain's
> just been fooling around and you're very inside yourself and detached. That's
> the trip with drugs. You detach yourself from other people and that's not
> where it's at for me. (Felton & Glover 1971: 206)

This like other countercultural 'lines of flight' however, was ephemeral. It was not

long before the revellers of Haight Street were graduates of the Harvard Law School

(Gitlin 1993).

Nevertheless, rock as an example of dramaturgical strategy and as an instrument of

mass communication harnessed by the mass media demonstrated the potential of

music as a source for social and cultural critique, and, as Gitlin (1993) claims:

> More than underground newspapers, more than political speeches at
> demonstrations, more than cosmic gurus, the sound that was near constantly in
> the ears of the great mass of America's counterculturally inclined youths came
> from their stereos. (Goffman 2004: 303)

Rock music in the 1960s was instrumental in the evolution and definition of American

youth culture and features as a principle component of its carnivalesque strategy:

> The bands may have allowed themselves to be swallowed by the voracious
> maw of corporate America, but they nonetheless transformed the country's
> cultural landscape in the process...If the groups didn't manage, or for that

matter, set out to overthrow corporate America, they encouraged American
youth to entertain that second thought. (Echols 2002: 41-42)

Rock's communion with technology is also an important factor contributing towards

music as a medium of social collectivity and the principal way with which it is

encountered. Technological innovation can at once improve and impair how rock is

received. Technology creates a sanitised and sometimes unrecognisable version of it.

Another critique of technology in music considers how recording expunges more than

just elements of sound (Regev 1994). In this instance, musical agents such as guitarist

and drummer, once integral to the production process are expendable. The music

producer is charged with ultimate authority. The mixing desk edits, splices, up-ends,

ousts, exaggerates and fashions a sonic collage which may be quite unlike anything of

original artistic intention (Friedlander 1996). This is the application of science and the

erosion of the live and organic. The recorded version of rock music is that 'less

typically a song than an arrangement of recorded sounds' (Gracyk 1996: 1).

In this scenario less and less significance is attached to the artists and musicians as the

originators of the music. It places far more weight on the engineers who manipulate

composition in the search and production of sound. This is problematic, not just as a

process which emasculates the artist but which signifies artificiality:

> The increasing 'purity' of recorded sound – no extraneous or accidental noises
> – is the mark of its artificiality. (Frith 1988: 21)

As rock music asserts the primacy of production technique over the input of design of

its artists, the authenticity of the final musical product is seemingly jeopardised and

thrown into question. Records are thus set apart from music in its live incarnation, as

a concert, or gig. They become simulacrum, not real but ideal events. In the modern

realm of rock production the engineer is rewarded with the ultimate choice.

> The musical judgements, choices and skills of producers and engineers
> became as significant as those of the musicians and, indeed, the distinction
> between engineers and musicians has become meaningless (Frith 1988: 22)

The music producer in his final cut may dispense with the human artist who is

increasingly invisible and expendable. This is the design of contemporary dance

music which asserts the primacy of the technician; the Disc Jockey (Thornton 1995).

This however does not suppose the complete removal of human artistry but the

accentuated role and industrialization of the technological apparatus (Frith 1988). It

furthermore suggests the primacy of the body within the modern musical framework

and how rhythm is used both in the medium of rock and dance music to form a

physical synergy.

> ...Rock music is not rational...it is dynamic, shaped by bodily movement, a
> communicational complex of music patterns and images of movement that is
> to be experienced and understood in perceptual bodily terms. (Wicke 1982:
> 231)

Rock and dance music use the body as a channel for exotic and erotic forms of bodily

communication. Dance as play is a clear example of carnivalesque challenging

established cultural values and opening up new, transitory cultural spaces and

subjectivities (Thornton 1995). It articulates a kinetic communication of the body,

casting new shapes, forms and patterns of movement and self expression. In 1964 the

dance craze that had taken hold of Europe spread to the United States in the form of

discotheque.

> The discotheque featured programmed music spun by a disc jockey rather than
> the live bands Americans were used to...As with fashion, the organising
> principle behind the dances was the charade. (Braunstein 2002: 247)

New types of dance reduced the seriousness and banality of the everyday. It broke the mould of rigid, formal and programmed types of movement and allowed for often absurdist or infantile styles as evidenced by new dances such as the *Woodpecker*, *Hitchhiker* or *Chickenback* (Braunstein 2002). Critically it provided a different interaction with music, one which was corporeal, fully participative and improvisational. The dance of rock 'n' roll and rock music signified the taboo (Bennett 2003). The gyrations of Elvis Presley and suggestive eroticism of Jim Morrison represented a sexualised embodiment of music which not only provoked moral outrage and panic but signalled a new means of interaction with sound-scapes.

If anything this indicated the re-emergence of a distinctly Black paradigm of rhythmic sensuality which white, paternal America deemed dangerously permissive and threatening (Cavallo 1999). In a contemporary context music which emphasises and preferences sound above all else (drum 'n' bass, trance) embraces a post-modern symbiosis of natural, corporal rhythm and technology (Thornton 1995).

The next section considers how rock music is problematised as a pastoral strategy and as a facet of commercial enterprise.

6.10 Far from Pastoral: Rock as Commercial Enterprise

This section deals with rock music as a conscious type of labour focusing predominantly on 1960s countercultural rock music as an extension of commercial enterprise.

The 1960s American counterculture recognised the benefits of technology in facilitating a return to the pastoral. Technological progress pointed towards a leisured and free existence unencumbered by labour. This was the post-scarcity thesis. The best example of the successful synthesis of technology and the pastoral is the rock festival.

> For the counterculture, then, the rock festival prefigured a new communal society lived close to a benign natural world, with the Woodstock festival in July 1969 becoming the epitome of such utopian dreams. (Ingram 2007: 7)

Whilst Woodstock (1969) is represented in popular culture as the acme of the rock pastoral, the Monterey International Pop Festival of 1967 was the event which first signalled the existence and potential of the American counterculture, the Haight hippie and San Francisco sound:

> Monterey Pop lasted only three days, but its reverberations were still being felt years later. The whole rock juggernaut – not just Woodstock – had its origins in the festival…An especially "happy accident" for the music industry, Monterey Pop spawned "the next billion dollar business". (Echols 2002: 400

1960's counterculture was however in many respects resistant in accepting its technological and overtly capitalist mediation. The utopian tinged rhetoric of *Rolling Stone* journalist, Andrew Kopkind, provides a lucid example of the counterculture's (almost intentional) myopia to the method of its production:

> What is not illusionary, is the reality of a new culture of opposition. It grows out of the disintegration of the old forms, the vinyl and aerosol institutions that carry all the inane and destructive values of privatism, competition, commercialism, profitability and elitism. (Kopkind 1969: 153)

It seems that Kopkind forgot the means of his dissemination. He speaks from a rock magazine that not only celebrates the very vinyl he rejects, but forms a part of a multi-media industry consciously driven by the values he fulminates against 'privatism, competition, commercialism, profitability and elitism'. Indeed *Rolling Stone* provides an explicit example of hip or avant-garde capitalism. This advertising copy from the backpage of *The New York Times* in 1969 is a case in point:

> If you are a corporate executive trying to understand what is happening in youth today, you cannot afford to be without *Rolling Stone*. If you are a student, professor, a parent, this is your life because you already know that rock and roll is more than just music; it is the energy centre of the new culture and youth revolution. (Lydon 1992: 485)

Since such times *Rolling Stone* has stood accused of being overtly mainstream and commercialised. It is charged as having lost the pulse of the youth generation, of an 'unrepentant rockist fogeyism' and failing to move beyond a canon of popular music identifiable as sixties and early seventies rock (Rosen 2006). Founding editor Jann Wenner is head of a multi-media empire and his story of success is one of few bohemian entrepreneurships. Nonetheless this so called *voice of a generation* was intrinsically driven by a desire for wealth and power facilitated by a commercial aptitude. He was an unabashed businessman:

> One of the critical elements in Wenner's success was that he knew not only how to develop and exploit talent, but also when and how to dump it. (Weir 2005: 1)

Critically rock music did not overcome nor cannot remain exterior to the industrialisation of culture. Whilst events such as Monterey, Woodstock and even

perhaps the Human Be-In demonstrated the potential for pastoral living through rock, the greater reality some might argue was that,

> For all its liberating potential rock is doomed to a bitter impotence to those whom it attacks…rather than being an example of how freedom can be achieved within the capitalist structure, is an example of how capitalism can, almost without a conscious effort, deceive those whom it oppresses…rock & roll stars are captives on a leash, and their plight is but a metaphor for that all young people and black people in America. (Lydon 1992: 478)

Frank Zappa, a resident of Los Angeles and by extension outside of the back to nature pastoralism of Haight bands such as the Jefferson Airplane, rejected and satirised the over-the-top zealotry of the hippies. With his band the 'Mothers of Invention', Zappa's *We're Only In It For the Money* (1968), was a direct affront to the 'more-rustic-than thou' style of the hippies (Charlesworth 1993: 34). The cover art-work for the album was similarly a send-up of the Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. Much of Zappa's work such as *Weasels Ripped My Flesh* (1970) was a further reminder that the hippie's utopianistic strategy was implicitly simple and naïve.

> [Zappa] reminded his listeners that the desire to go back to pristine nature is a Romantic fantasy that masks the material facts of labour, power and class inequality that have been fundamental to human relationships with the natural world, and cannot be wished away. (Ingram 2006: 9)

It follows that sixties rock's claim to be anything but a product of capitalism was hollow. *We're Only in it for the Money*, was a playful indictment of this. Rock promoter, Bill Graham, who established the Fillmore East in New York and the Fillmore West in San Francisco, and played host to many of the major rock acts of the 1960s also weighed in on this theme, commenting:

> An artist would get onstage and say: "Let's get together",…and fight and share and communicate. Then he'd get into his jet and fly off to his island and play with his sixteen-track machine. It was hypocrisy. (Bennett 2004: 39)

There is little getting away from the fact that behind the posturing and claims of

cultural integrity, rock music was a type of capitalist enterprise. One of the

counterculture's most glaring contradictions was that rock music, far from just

another hedonistic kick, was labour intensive. The Grateful Dead were one of the

hardest working of all the San Francisco bands:

> The Dead rehearsed everyday, seven or eight hours at a crack, at an abandoned
> theatre on Potrero Hill, and it was at these sessions that Hart and Kreutzman
> began to map out the band's new floorplan. (Selvin 1999: 156)

The North American musicians who made up much of the most enduring music of the

1960s were all committed to a scheme that was distinctly labour driven (Cavallo

1999). There was no such 'dropping out' for this cadre. Their rebellion was located in

a determination to succeed in a hotly competitive industry.

> ...Dylan, Neil Young, Frank Zappa, Jimi Hendrix, the Band, the Doors,
> Jefferson Airplane, David Crosby, Steven Stills and the Grateful Dead, among
> others – approached their work both as artists and as determined, idiosyncratic
> entrepreneurs (Cavallo 1999: 146)

The rebellion of such artists was not as a rejection of capitalist means of production

but a desire to be autonomous, self-regulatory and effectively self-employed. Many of

these artists succeeded in securing such rights even those, such as the Grateful Dead

who would eventually fall under the auspices of Warner Bros. Yet even these

managed to negotiate an unprecedented record deal consisting of total artistic self-

determination, infinite studio time and a royalty rate tied to the length of each album

side[20] (Unterberger 2003). The only demand unmet by Warner Bros. was that record

executive Joseph Smith *drop* L.S.D with them (Scully & Dalton 1996).

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[20] This opposed to the standard measure of royalty rate per song.

Whilst some of the San Francisco bands such as The Grateful Dead professed oneness

and sameness with their audience, maintaining themselves as residents of the Haight-

Ashbury community[21], it would be naïve to think that they were completely

indifferent to money.

> None of the bands – not even the Dead, whose scraggly, scowling keyboardist,
> Pigpen, was always scaring off record companies – was opposed to making
> money. The bands wanted high-paying gigs and lucrative recording contracts,
> but they didn't want to go the show business route...San Francisco musicians
> weren't going to churn out two-and-a-half bubblegum hits to please record
> companies and radio programmers; nor were they going to tone down their
> style so they could appear on American Bandstand...They were *auteurs*, not
> crowd pleasing entertainers. (Echols 2002: 39)

This is perhaps the critical distinction that accounts for rock's 'authenticity'. Rock

musicians of integrity and value are accordingly situated not as lowly entertainers but

as *auteurs*. In doing so, they escape Adorno's vilification as senseless and moronic

pedlars of cultural pastiche. However, there is yet again a difficulty within this

analysis in that the business of rock music is so much to do with spectacle and

performance and necessarily an association with show-business. Frith (1983) argues

that,

> As local live performers, musicians remain a part of their community, subject
> to its values and needs, but as recording artists they experience the pressures
> of the market; they automatically become 'rock 'n' roll imperialists', pursuing
> national and international sales. The recording musicians 'community', in
> short, is defined by purchasing patterns. (Frith 1983: 51)

As bands local to the Haight-Ashbury, The Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane

initially created a space that was free from the pressures and demands of main-stream

music making (Bennett 2003). However once they achieved national recognition they

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[21] The Grateful Dead resided at 710 Ashbury Street which served as the focal, communicative, passing-through point and assembly point for the Haight hippies.

surrendered the freedom of localism and amateurism which previously enabled their

position as integral members of the Haight-Ashbury community.

Nevertheless rock as a living and experiential theatre demands a mass and popular

interaction. I argue that this is how rock music took and continues to exert a

communicative potency. Rock musicians remain, despite their fame and wealth,

cultural servants. In the case of the 1960s,

> A handful of rock musicians acted as electric gamelons for this bizarre new
> culture, both articulating the language, dress and style and spreading the
> infection. And in doing so, they changed the way music was played and heard
> around the world. (Selvin 1999: i)

This ostensibly is how rock music and rock musicians are best understood. They are

unequivocally rooted within the process of carnival. In the context of the life act, the

rock musician is more than just a purveyor of sound. He/she is a performer, icon,

public statesman and illusion:

> Rock performers are never merely musicians. They are to a greater or lesser
> extent also actors playing characters they have invented. (Stumway 1992: 122)

Mick Jagger was one such performer who frequently role-played taking on a

personification of the devil (Hotchner 1990). So much of what the 1960s Haight

Ashbury constituted was performative. This was a cultural performance located

within different signifiers and sign systems contributing towards an alternative life-

act. Rock music was a facet of countercultural performance which has neither faded

nor accrued irrelevancy:

> Instead of being progressively tamed and assimilated, rock and roll took on a
> life of its own, not just as youth music, but as a way of life that youth lived,
> and, more important, were represented as living. (Stumway 1992: 119)

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6.11 Final Remarks

To recap I have covered the principal themes which occupy and emanate from the discourse of rock music and its location within countercultural dramaturgy. Across nine sections I have examined: the efficacy of music as a powerful cultural paradigm; the basis of rock music; a genealogy of popular music; rock within the sociology of art; modernism/technology and the authentic/pastoral; technology and new ways of interacting with music; technology and the diminution of authenticity; the formation of a rock collective: togetherness, 'adhesive love' and 'fantasy cities'; and far from pastoral: rock as a commercial enterprise. This chapter has served to identify how rock became the signature of the counterculture and how it continues to provide an important means of self-determination for subsequent subcultures.

The hippie counterculture, most especially through its music, demonstrates that cultural expression and subjectivity are in constant flux and continually competing against being pigeonholed or mainstreamed. The carnival of the American countercultural is a case-study of cultural antagonisms, which demonstrates how performance is infinitely adaptable and replicable for different user groups, be they commercial or not.

The next chapter offers a critique of post-modernity within which rock music and its various subcultures persist.

Chapter 7
A Critique of 'Post-Modern' Anti-Hegemonic Subcultures

7.1 Chapter Overview

Chapter 6 provided a treatment of the counterculture's music; its role in facilitating the subcultural neo-tribe and its position as a corporate artifact. This is the penultimate chapter of the thesis which expands on the theme of culture and commerce and the situation of a 'post-modern' subjectivity. I accordingly argue that consumer culture is integral to the cultivation of cultural identity.

This chapter provides a summation of the sites, success and difficulty of carnival as a tactic for cultures of resistance and as a paradigm for cultural rejuvenation within the 'postmodern' context. This chapter approaches the sixties' counterculture as an historical scheme and recurrent trend from which carnival emerges. This chapter makes a thorough assessment of the incorporation thesis. It focuses on hip capitalism and claims of fake and authentic counterculture. It argues that music forms one of the most important facets of carnival and is integral to the production of group identity, lifestyle and neo-tribalism. It also claims that sixties rock music is a primary method for the historical retrieval of the counterculture which surrounded it. As such, I consider music as one aspect of the sixties counterculture which survives as an important historical artifact, borrowed from and reapplied to articulate new types of youth subcultures. This chapter considers how carnival as a cyclical phase provides a link between past and present cultural landscapes via collective memory and cultural heritage. I furthermore argue that such a cycle accords the infinite replicability of paradigms of cultural performance. The claim is that carnival occurs in multiple and antagonistic contexts, as a project of the individual and the community. It is also observable within the American economic marketplace and city

street. Corporate sponsored carnival is not identified in this chapter, as a complete

negation of the incorporation thesis. Instead it occurs in tandem with countercultural

performance. This accounts for the perpetuation of anti-hegemonic discourse, processes

of *détournement* and anti-spectacle (through spectacle) which ultimately constitute the

performance of counterculture.

7.2 Sources

In a review of 'postmodernism' the works of Barthes (1977); Baudrillard (1975);

Goodwin (1991); Jameson (1983, 1984); Nehring (2003) and Reich (1991). Sources used

in a discussion of incorporation and consumer culture include: Heath and Potter (2005);

Lury (1996); Savan (1994); Ulrich 2003 and most especially Frank (1997).

The list of (sub)cultural theorists is considerable. Nevertheless these include: Bellah

(1986); Bennett (1999); Chambers (1987); Clecak (1983); Cohen (1972); Cohen &

Krugman (1994); Ehrenreich (2008); Fairtrade & Klein (2001); Featherstone (2000);

Grossberg (1984); Hetherington (1992); Hebdige (1979, 1988); Kellner (1992);

Lachmann (1988); Lipsitz (1990, 1994); Mackay ([1841] 1980); Maffesoli (1996);

McKay (1996, 2000); McRobbie (1993); Parsons (1942, 1963); Pfeil (1988); Redhead

(1993); Sanders & Vail (2007) and Willis (1990).

The fourth type of literary source relates directly to the counterculture. Some of those

should by now be familiar: Anderson (1994, 1996); Braunstein and Doyle (2002); Burner

(1997); Cavallo (1999); Chafe (1986); Echols (2002); Fearon (1968); Gitlin (1987);

Harrington (1972); Hinckle (1967); Hoskyns (1997); Marwick (2000); Perry (1985);

Selvin (1999) and Unterberger (2003).

The fifth section of sources constitutes social geographers and those who view the street

as an important cultural and carnival space. These include: Çelik, Favro and Ingersoll

(1996); Da Matta (1991); Kostof & Tobias (1991); Sander (1973) and Shields (1992a).

Writers offering critical analysis of the nostalgia industry are: Coontz (1993); Hewison (1987); Samuel (1994) and Wright (1985). Those providing academic commentary on music and technology are Auslander (1998); Eyerman (2002); Goodman (1998) and Haynsworth (2003).There remain two final categories. The first is that of literary fiction and includes Coupland (1991) and Ellis (1991) which were key readings in forming an understanding of 'postmodern' and branded subjectivity. Finally two personal memoirs were incorporated; these being: Cobain (2002) and Kessler (1990).

This chapter begins with a consideration of the 'post-modern' self within which the contemporary cultural milieu exists. I argue that the 'post-modern' self is a conglomeration or borrowing of different aspects of the sixties counterculture which are skillfully used to create a new, though arguably vacuous and uncontextualised version of youth. My argument suggests that a 'post-modern' performance of culture represents the final distillation of a culture of resistance.

7.3 The *Branded* Self

In the early 1990s when Douglas Coupland first published *Generation X*, the writings of French theorists such as Baudrillard and Barthes worked their way, were popularized and adapted by the media, infiltrating the imagination of a distinctly non-academic audience. As Goodwin claims,

> One of the most bizarre developments in the brief history of media and cultural studies is that…the word "postmodern" reached record stores, magazines and television programmes. (Goodwin 1991: 186)

One of the central problems of the contemporary, popular "postmodern" condition is the social construct of 'authenticity', or to be more precise 'inauthenticity'. 'Inauthenticity' takes root from the thesis of incorporation which suggests that every expression of cultural aesthetics is open to co-option as argued by Marcuse (1965). More specifically, 'authentic' anti-authoritarian performance is made illegitimate and inauthentic via its assimilation and adaptation by corporate institutions (Nehring 2003). This complaint is often made of musical artists who having found commercial success are said to have 'sold out' to corporate values. I contend that the distinction made between culture and commerce disappears in a post-industrial world where cultural economy supersedes political economy. Following this economic paradigm, globalised entertainment corporations such as Sony, Time-Warner and Disney are preeminent 'manufacturers' of culture. Furthermore, not only are these corporations the principal distributors of cultural hardware and software like music, film, print media, television and video games but they also represent the most powerful economic actors in the world (Du Gay 1997).

Consequently, the 'economic' and 'cultural' are less antagonistic opposites and more 'hybrid' categories. Economic praxis impacts upon the formation of cultural phenomena; and vice versa. It is hard to dispute the line of thinking provided by cultural theorist, Du Gay (1997) who argues that the separation of commerce and culture into distinct antithetical compartments is unpragmatic:

> ...what films would we watch, what televisions would we view them on, what music would we listen to and so forth, if we were determined to enforce an absolute division between culture and economy. (Du Gay 1997: 2-3)

Indeed the proliferation of intermediary industries of culture such as advertising, design and marketing demonstrate how entwined commerce and culture have become. The borrowing and recycling of culture has led to the creation of new types of commercial expression, consumerism and 'lifestyling'.

In a post-industrial realm new forms of aestheticization are identifiable through diverse trends of popular lifestyle which include *Starbucks* take-away coffee, online social networking and an insistent gross materialism. This in turn has led to the creation of specific cultural meanings yet ones explicitly manufactured. The argument arises that cultural 'goods' derive meaning exclusively through their production and circulation. This falls in line with Adorno and Horkheimer's (1979) theory of pseudoindividuality, where the originality or 'authenticity' claimed of a cultural product is in fact duplicitous. Adorno and Horkheimer (1979) argue that underneath the gloss of hyper-marketed, hyper-mediated and hyper-distributed cultural wares is a highly superficial imitation of a cultural ideal. I suggest that this theory can be used to understand a 'post-modern'

identity formed from commercial cultural *bricolage* and the continuous recycling of culture memes.

It is hard to escape the reality of the global entertainment corporation and its domination of cultural enterprise. In 1982, this formed a chief concern for UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) who claimed that the spread of the culture industries had caused the 'marginalization of cultural messages that do not take the form of goods, primarily of value as marketable commodities' (UNESCO 1982: 10).

The increased synergy of the culture industry and the degree of its interconnectedness signifies two important cultural changes. One- that increased cultural fusion will cause a single sourced 'warehouse' of culture; two, that consumers are becoming increasingly distanced from a physical interaction with culture. Theme one identifies that cultural goods are now most readily sourced from physical and online hypermarkets such as *Walmart* and *Amazon*, respectively. Theme two posits a distance from cultural interaction or at least the source of cultural production. This form of cultural interaction is increasingly mediated through sophisticated mediascapes and cultural intermediaries such as those mentioned by Du Gay (1997).

This thesis argues that 'post-modern' processes of cultural / commercial invention are not however detrimental to the formation of a culture aesthetic. Instead they offer a reconfigured way of approaching and interpreting cultural realms and a pathway to new meanings. Whilst a 'post-modern' epoch is indicative of the cannibalization of culture

epitomized by Lasch, Beck et al. the role of the 'post-modern' consumer cannot be

overstated as an agent determining the shape of the cultural landscape.

Whilst the 1960s appears in the popular imagination as a decade of immense social and

cultural change, historical discourse has consistently failed to mention another type of

revolution whose resonance is arguably more widely, though less ecstatically, prevalent

(Frank 1997). The 1960s revolution of the business world and the growing sophistication

of the media apparatus allowed for the adaptation of countercultural forms into global

commodities (Frank 1997). This was a silent revolution however, where consumers

bought into counterculture, without understanding what it actually was. As Jameson

(1984) argues the popularization of counterculture through mass entertainment caused its

emotional 'depth' to dissipate. This is the rationale of the incorporation thesis which

argues that the counterculture is increasingly unobservable or invisible as it is assimilated

into the dominant mass culture.

The incorporation thesis is two-fold. First it claims that all cultural expression is made

inauthentic by its assimilation into multinational corporate capitalism. Secondly a

'transparent phoniness' associated with cultural producers determines performance itself

as counterfeit. (Nehring 2003: 59). The incorporation thesis has echoes of Marcuse's

(1965) theory of repressive tolerance in as much as culture is an organized and regulated

enterprise of state or corporate control.

This theme of cultural 'in'authenticity'', which I take to mean commercialised or mass

produced forms of culture, can, quite easily, be traced back to the 1960s counterculture

which was, in conjunction with a booming and innovative corporate world, moulded into a consumable. Whilst Bob Dylan claimed that he would no longer work on 'Maggie's Farm', the Grateful Dead demanded total creative autonomy (Sounes 2001, Scully & Dalton 1996). Nonetheless one was making millions for Columbia and the other, for Warner Bros. The age of technocracy heralded unprecedented means for cultural dissemination. For the music industry, technological development not only meant that singers and bands could be heard by a mass audience (via FM radio waves), but as recording artists who were experienced and consumed via their recorded output, the vinyl record (Eyerman 2002).

The process of 'inauthentication' begins when subculture is fetishized by the media and adapted by the adman (Jameson 1983). The advertising executives of Madison Avenue in particular were alert to the profitability of incorporating counterculture into their campaigns.

> In the counterculture, admen believed they had found both a perfect model for consumer subjectivity, intelligent and at war with the conformist past, and a cultural machine for turning disgust with consumerism into the very fuel by which consumerism might be accelerated. (Frank 1997: 119)

This suggests that the sixties counterculture was transformed into a brand, a category and style of consumption. Mass production changed subculture from something exotic, other than mainstream and most especially rebellious, into that which was familiar, mainstream and tamed (Jameson 1984). Anti-hegemonic subculture lost its aesthetic distance from the mainstream. Jameson (1984) argues that,

...local countercultural forms of cultural resistance and guerilla warfare...are all somehow secretly disarmed and reabsorbed by a system of which they themselves might well be considered a part, since they can achieve no distance from it. (Jameson 1984: 87)

Contemporary mass culture misappropriates and even glamorizes rebellion as a signifier of style. The mass availability and consumption of Che Guevara t-shirt prints and bedroom wall-posters, by yearly cohorts of undergraduate students[1], demonstrate that rebellion is less a war of attrition and more an investment in the cultural capital of cool. History is thus eviscerated. As such rebellion is modified and packaged as a fashion aesthetic.

Baudrillard (1975) suggests postmodernism is the era and condition of empty signifiers, maintained and controlled by what Reich (1991) calls high waged, high status and powerful 'symbolic analysts'. These are,

> ...lawyers, investment bankers...academics, public relations executives, real estate developers...advertising and marketing specialists, art directors, design engineers, architects, writers and editors, musicians, television and film producers. (Reich 1991: 466-467)

It is these elites who Baudrillard and Reich claim are responsible for the deterioration of cultural 'authenticity' into a smokescreen behind which consumer subjectivity lurks. Farber (1994) suggests that,

> Due to the tremendous expansion of the federal government, due to the massive increase in the reach of mass media, and due to the embracing of market-forged consumer lifestyles by most Americans, elites have had to pay increasing attention to maintaining or improving their status by controlling for cultural manipulations. (Farber 1994: 293)

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[1] Observations drawn from my own undergraduate students and having visited student union fairs.

The corporate manipulation of cultural tribes, and these include, according to Reich (1991) rock musicians as pioneers of cultural innovation and corporate collusion, is what instigates a plastic culture. This is *Generation X* (Coupland 1991) or the trend of 'postmodern' psychotic consumerism (Easton Ellis 1991). Easton Ellis' (1991) novel, *American Psycho* is a particularly lucid portrayal of the *Yuppie* sensibility of the 1980s and the construction of identity articulated via brand consumption. In this example, the "postmodern" presentation of self occurs through the accumulation and interconnectivity of consumer brands. These facilitate the production of identity. For Easton Ellis the "postmodern" pursuit of individualism is thwarted by its multiplicity.

The following is an excerpt from the novel which charts the morning preparation of the principal character and narrator, Patrick Bateman. It is at once densely descriptive yet evinces no discernable characterisation. The reader is offered little insight into the emotional or social aspect of Patrick Bateman. This is an explicit example of 'postmodern' consumer identity:

> In bed I'm wearing Ralph Lauren silk pajamas and when I get up I slip on a paisley ancient madder robe...After I change into Ralph Lauren monogrammed boxer shorts and a Fair Isle sweater and slide into silk polkadot Enrico Hidolin slippers...I pour some Plax antiplaque formula into a stainless steel tumbler...The I squeeze Rembrandt onto a faux tortoise-shell toothbrush...Then I use the Probright tooth polisher and next the Interplak tooth polisher. (Ellis 1991: 25-26)

This rich description suggests an identity created and arranged entirely by consumer product. Bateman's existence within the everyday world necessitates consumer role-play. The array of consumer products, are what locate him as both a *Yuppie* and denizen of Wall Street.

> The shoes I'm wearing are crocodile loafers by A. Testoni...I find a Burberry scarf...I take the elevator downstairs to the lobby, rewinding my Rolex by gently shaking my wrist. I say good morning to the doorman, step outside and hail a cab, heading downtown toward Wall Street. (Ellis: 1991: 30)

This consumer trend is also observable in the contemporary Hollywood blockbuster. The James Bond franchise in particular is a flagrant and unashamed vehicle for corporate product endorsement. James Bond wears an *Omega* watch, drinks *Smirnoff* vodka and drives an *Aston Martin*. He is to such degree less an autonomous character and more an accumulation of branded parts. The degree to which the advertiser plays on and exploits stereotypical notions of masculinity is largely successful. There is little attempt to distract from this strategy. The conspicuous yet passive consumer is ultimately formed by a brand compulsion and receptivity that shapes the shopping list (Heath & Potter 2005).

I argue that consumerism is vital to the creation of a 'post-modern' identity. The act, or indeed art, of consuming, is the process by which a 'post-modern' subjectivity arises. Whilst anti-hegemonic subculture condemns this, it is, much like the Yippies, complicit with it, if only by interaction. The signifiers of such subculture are, I would suggest, not so different from those used by the mainstream. Arguably it is only their branding which differs.

7.4 Advertising and Assimilation: The Incorporation Thesis

Hip capitalism and hip consumerism first appeared in the 1960s, when the consumer

good was transformed from a utility to lifestyle aesthetic (Frank 1997). Frank (1997:

137) uses the example of Suzuki as less a motorcycle and more a means of self-

expression and freedom: 'Suzuki has the power to free you'.

Cultural and countercultural discourse is inseparably linked to corporate identity. Writing

in the Village Voice, Savan (1994) complains of,

> ...how easily any idea, deed, or image can become part of the corporate
> sponsored world...a culture that sponsors rebellion...bark[ing] instructions at you
> to be rebellious. (Savan 1994: 51)

The 'postmodern' countercultural identity is, in this example, bought and worn.

The 1960s marketer's focus on 'liberation' and 'revolution' is now dominant across the

cultural industries of media: music, film and press. This is the quarry from which

contemporary, if only co-opted, styles of counterculture are mined. 'postmodern'

individualistic and rebellious youth culture is accordingly the product of the continued

antagonism between organic and corporate countercultural paradigms (Nehring 2003).

> In contemporary American public culture the legacy of the consumer revolution
> of the 1960s is unmistakable. Today there are few things more beloved of our
> mass media than the figure of the cultural rebel, the defiant individualist resisting
> the mandates of the machine civilization. (Frank 1997: 227)

However, in a 'postmodern' context such readings of dissidence appear as largely

fraudulent. Media originating discourse saturates public consciousness causing the

diminution of its impact as a powerful, and critically, honest, signifier (Jameson 1984).

Eventually such discourse is bowdlerized. Jameson (1984) claims that,

> Overt expressions of social and political defiance no longer scandalize anyone, and are not only received with the greatest complacency but have themselves become institutionalized. (Jameson 1984: 56)

I argue, with Ulrich (2003), that the incorporation of counterculture into mass culture, and accordingly its popularization, reduces its aesthetic value and potential for critique as it is reduced to a limited imitation of cultural dissidence. Subversive behaviour, or acts of defiance, such as body piercing or tattooing are subverted and accordingly neutralized through their assimilation into mainstream culture (Sanders & Vail 2007, Featherstone 2000). They consequently *lose their edge*, their power to outrage and their mark of distinction which separates them from the mass society. As such counterculture becomes indistinguishable from the mainstream and its statement of alienation loses currency (Grossberg 1984). If anything, corporate sponsored acts of resistance further the thesis of the Western mass society and scaffold its claims to be a beacon of democracy, heterogeneity and tolerance. Absorbed into the dominant culture, counterculture is obfuscated, or at the very least, becomes so marginalized as to be undetectable (Hebdige 1979).

The dominant articulation of counterculture, is, in this line of thinking, inherently its opposite. Jameson (1984) draws a similarly bleak conclusion in his analysis of punk.

> We all, in one way or another, dimly feel that not only…local countercultural forms of cultural resistance and guerilla warfare, but also even overtly political interventions like those of The Clash, are all somehow secretly disarmed and reabsorbed by a system of which they themselves might well be considered a part, since they can achieve no distance from it. (Jameson 1984: 87)

Jameson does not consider how counterculture evolves within the mainstream. I suggest however, that countercultural practitioners knowingly use the dominant corporate framework to achieve their own development and profusion. They do this as pockets of resistance or subcultural niches of dominant culture (Cohen 1972). These subcultural satellites may develop to such an extent as to be independent of and external to the dominant culture. McRobbie (1993) argues that if social theorists relented on their anti-commercial agenda, they might discover that certain subcultures, from hip-hop to grunge and thrash metal, actually fight to preserve their self-autonomy. Members of these subcultures, in the process of making music and fashion, invent spaces and subjectivities which are exterior to the dominant culture (McRobbie 1993). Whilst subcultures work within the capitalist framework, their method of production:

> ...expresses the character of its producers in a way that is frequently in opposition to those available, received, or encouraged images or identities' (McRobbie 1993: 412).

In this instance rock acts of the 1960s such as The Grateful Dead and The Mothers of Invention (prior to their self-made labels), Bob Dylan, Neil Young and The Band were able to disseminate a more potent social critique by being a part of the dominant system.

The word *part* intimates a notion of belonging, of adherence to, collusion with and membership of. The intangibility of the ''postmodern'' landscape, however, makes the *part* seem tenuous, fragmented and dislocated. This certainly was true of the sixties

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counterculture which was far from a homogenous community or social group and more a

haphazard and loose arrangement of cultural and political rebels.

Pfeil (1988) argues that the vacuum of identity and meaning wrought by overt

commercialism and fragmentary culture exacerbates what he sees as youth's sense of

alienation and rage. This is the case of the rebellious loser found in the works of

Coupland (1991, 2006) and Cohen and Krugman (1994) and labelled as *Generation X* or

Generation Ecch. In this context the rebellious loser is epitomized by the whine of punk

where cynicism is not only endorsed but celebrated.

This all suggests that 'postmodern' youth are unable to acquire a legitimate, self-

originating and evolving creative cultural habitat. *Generation X* fails to find a solution to

its rage other than through a consumer therapy which intensifies its feeling of dislocation

(Coupland 1991). Followers of the incorporation thesis therefore indict 'postmodern'

youth as a cohort of idle consumers of hedonistic abandon and flat-lined imaginations

(Redhead 1993). As Heath and Potter (2005) suggest:

> We are being systematically duped, manipulated, programmed into the
> consumerist cool mindset, tricked into buying products we otherwise would not
> really want. (Heath and Potter 2005: 210)

Youth's projection of rebellion through a highly stylized, impression of rage is less a

product of its own invention and more the repetitious yet unconscious cycle of

consumption and self-gratification (Nehring 2003). 'Postmodern' youth is itself a

concept, a social construct and brand which aids advertising and communicates to a

consumer base irrespective of age.

> Advertising has helped convince people they can forge an identity through consumption, and they can fill in that sense that something's missing with the right brand of running shoes or jeans or beer. (Pareles 1991: 29)

The cultural consumer is sold and legitimated as young, as rebellious, as a winner, as free

through consumption. Critically,

> The imagery and language of youth can be applied effectively to all sorts of products marketed to all varieties of people, because youth is an attractive consuming attitude, not an age – an attitude that was pre-eminently defined by the values of the counterculture. By 'youth' Madison Avenue meant hip, often expressed with psychedelic references, talk of rebellion, and intimations of free love. (Frank 1997: 118-119)

Youth accordingly becomes nothing beyond the signification of style. Hip is little more

than isolated and uncontextualised image (Barthes 1977). The image (overleaf) of Jack

Kerouac wearing khaki is designed to encourage the consumer to buy Gap khaki trousers

through the signification of cool (Heath & Potter 2005). At the same time it is hard to

imagine that the majority of Gap customers are avid readers of Beat literature. Instead

Kerouac is used as a loose derivative of counterculture, which signifies cool.

JACK KEROUAC GAP ADVERTISEMENT - "KEROUAC WORE KHAKIS."
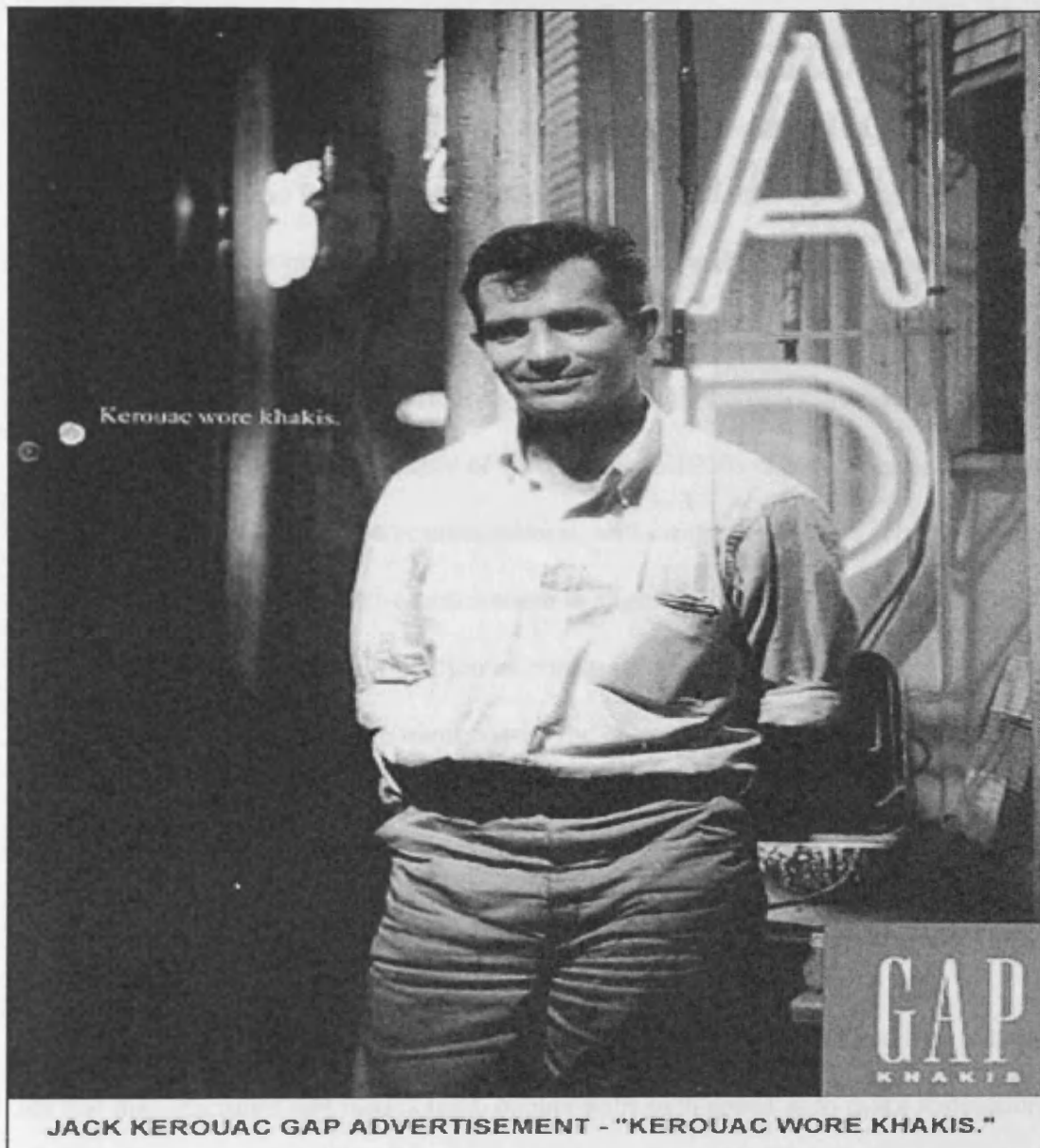
7.1 The effective commercialisation of culture. Beat hero Jack Kerouac is posthumously used by clothing store GAP as a pinup boy for their range of Khaki trousers.

7.5 Commercially Cool - Forever Young?

This section considers the extent of anti-hegemonic counterculture as a commercial product. This is vital to forming an understanding of the dichotomous portrayal of counterculture as both organic and synthetic or cultural and corporate, respectively.

The contemporary 'postmodern' identity forged through the process of mass consumption has echoes of the one-dimensionality of the American 1950s culture of gross materialism and hints at the resurgence of a countercultural, anti-consumerist ethic. The re-emergence of a Digger styled outright anti-consumerism is slightly difficult. Fairtrade and Klein's (2001) critique apart, the total rejection of consumer exchange seems hard. The problem is two fold. One is the herd-like mentality of the cultural consumer. As Mackay suggested,

> Men, it has been well said, think in herds; it will be seen that they go mad in
> herds, while they only recover their senses slowly and one by one. (Mackay 1980:
> 34)

Secondly, the absorption of culture from that which is from the street and thus authentic, into that manufactured and repackaged, occurs with such speed as to make distinction from one to the other almost impossible (Nehring 2003). This is the role of the cultural connoisseur, who in popular culture is best known as the music or fashion critic (Featherstone 1991). The propensity to be countercultural adjudicated and stratified by the cultural elite. That which is stylistically original, different and other achieves a high cultural value such as Dylan's *Blonde on Blonde* or the Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper's*

Lonely Hearts Club Band. In this instance counterculture accrues significant commercial

value which ironically facilitates commercial hegemony over the cultural landscape.

Counterculture has come to signify that which is cool and for this reason is celebrated by

cultural marketers and salesmen. In a discussion of the 1990's culture industry Lipsitz

suggests that,

> ...recombinant practices of 1990s popular culture ranging from performance art to
> popular fashions, from rap and hip-hop iconography to rock music lyrics all
> employ strategic redeployments of remnants and remembrances of sixties culture.
> (Lipsitz 1994: 226-227)

The counterculture and the 1960s as a whole reoccur as important resources benefiting

and informing the cultural industry. Television programmes such as *The Wonder Years*

and *Family Ties* provide a dialogue between the past and present that caters for both

young and old audiences and also serves as a highly profitable platform for network

advertising sales (Lipsitz 1994). 1960s iconography similarly appeared in the subject

matter of some of America's rock royalty such as John Mellencamp's *R.O.C.K in the*

USA (1986) and Bruce Springsteen's *My Hometown* (1985). The use of sixties

iconography particularly within the domain of the music video is indicative of its power

and influence and how countercultural traits are highly associative of those attempting to

disseminate cultural credibility (Lipsitz 1990). The marker of cool which counterculture

brings has allowed for its continuation and profusion across the American cultural

landscape:

> The countercultural style has become a permanent fixture on the American
> scene...because it so conveniently and efficiently transforms the myriad petty
> tyrannies of economic life – all the complaints about conformity, oppression,

bureaucracy, meaninglessness and the disappearance of individualism that
became virtually a national obsession during the 1950s – into rationales for
consuming. (Frank 1997: 3)

Frank (1997) argues that counterculture is used to camouflage the self-aggrandizing

intentions of capitalist venture. It also occurs as a patent extension of a distinctly

bourgeois cultural project. It is hard not to consider the original American counterculture

as anything other than a patriarchal, bourgeois excursion. Despite its ambitions for total

democracy and egalitarianism the counterculture was class based and male dominated

(Gitlin 1987). Counterculture was only made fully democratic with its global

dissemination and transformation into a media construct. Counterculture, now as then, is

unmistakable as an example of the middle class as consumers of subcultural subjectivity.

As Frank claims,

> ...Counterculture may be more accurately understood as a stage in the
> development of the values of the American middle class, a colourful installment
> in the twentieth century drama of consumer subjectivity. (Frank 1997: 29)

Indeed even the much celebrated sound of the sixties is recognizable as a component of

an aggressively ascendant business orientation. Rock music was incontestably a business.

The Haight-Ashbury hippies sought to escape the very thing which most clearly and

readily defined and situated them, their social status. Their privileged backgrounds were

the source of their insecurity, protest and revulsion which were nonetheless, inescapable

facets of who they were. The hippies' reintegration into the mainstream is accordingly, as

Harrington (1972) suggests not all that surprising:

> Free love and all-night drinking and art for art's sake were consequences of a
> single stern imperative: thou shalt not be bourgeois. But once the bourgeois itself

became decadent – once businessmen started hanging non-objective art in the boardroom – Bohemia was deprived of the stifling atmosphere without which it could not breathe. (Harrington 1997: 31)

Countercultural youth was fixed to the spirit of its time. At no one point did members of the counterculture consider their future. They were too busy dealing with the present. Chafe (1986) comments that for the counterculture, 'being was more important than becoming, living now more valuable than the drive to get ahead' (Chafe 1986: 327). A notion of living for and in the now is integral to the discourse of youth counterculture. As an unavoidably transitory biological and social phase youth necessarily is caught in and sustained by the moment. In a developmental sense youth's progress is also its death, leading as it does to adulthood (Parsons 1942, 1963). As a momentary fleeting phase, youth is recognizable as a fixation with the present and the deferment of the future and impending age.

I argue that youth is explicitly linked with carnival. As a social category it offers an apology for irresponsible, consequence free, experimental, individualist and rebellious behaviour (Hebdige 1988). Conceptually, youth also signifies that which is modern, up-to-the-minute, fashion conscious and cool. Youth in the sixties did not only evolve a type of consumer market but as a countercultural faction, became a brand and style of consumption. Nonetheless I agree with Willis (1990) who argues that youth has created a 'grounded aesthetics' through an interaction with consumer culture. Fearon (1968) described youth's consumptive habits as such:

When the new generation buys they want it for now. They're not interested in how long it will last…They accept obsolescence. They want the new, improved

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version tomorrow...New, improved. More than ever before. Everything is instant. Now. Everything is faster. (Fearon 1968: 55-56)

This is the same indictment of 'postmodern' youth for whom the speed of consumer transaction parallels the speed by which new performative subjectivies become available are contested, wither, revised and redeployed.

The ideal of a *Woodstock Nation* was fragmentary, isolated and mainly a media inspired chimera. Aside from a few scattered communes and the work of the Haight-Ashbury Diggers, hippiedom represented less a revolution of being and more the proclamation of youth as a highly significant social, cultural and economic group (Anderson 1996). The youth counterculture gave creative impetus to a consumer market and lifestyle that was transformed into something exciting, adventurous and, most importantly, modern.

> In the counterculture, admen believed they had found both a perfect model for consumer subjectivity, intelligent and at war with the conformist past, and a cultural machine for turning disgust with consumerism into the very fuel by which consumerism might be accelerated. (Frank 1997: 119)

Critics of the time argued that the hippies, far from being a threat to capitalist America, were indirectly its benefactor (Anderson 1994). The counterculture viewed as such facilitated the innovation of business practice and consumer markets.

> ...the hippies have not only accepted assimilation...they have swallowed it whole. The hippie culture is in many ways a prototype of the most ephemeral aspects of the larger American society. If the people looking in from the suburbs would change clothes, fun and some lightheartedness from the new gypsies, the hippies are delivering – and some of them are becoming rich hippies because of it. (Hinckle 1967: 23)

Hip capitalism signified how easily counterculture could be commodified and profited from, often with hippie consent. In 2008, a branch of the Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream chain sits at the intersection of Haight and Ashbury and is a telling reminder of the commercial legacy of counterculture. Similarly the *cyber geek* culture of Silicon Valley, occupies a strange and contradictory social and economic space which recalls the 1960s counterculture (Heath & Potter 2005). The Information Technology (I.T) revolution, much like the 1960s consumer revolution, was wrought, though perhaps more directly, by a collective of counterculturalists with strong entrepreneurial skills and business acumen.

If counterculture succeeds beyond its appeal as marketing tool or consumer fashion it is as a means of generating important social spaces. The internet arguably is the latter day version of the street. The next section considers the street as the site of (sub)cultural activity. This is important in developing a notion of cultural 'authenticity' or that which is exterior to commodification or processes of capitalist exchange

7.6 Street Carnival

I have applied the concept of *street* as a site of culture, as synonymous with cultural 'authenticity' and originality, which is free of corporate investment or influence. In another sense the street is a highly important physical and conceptual space where culture is played out, where carnivalesque occurs, and where counterculture originates (Ehrenreich 2008). It is the cradle of cultural invention, an open proscenium from which musical idiom, fashion styles, art, dance and even sport originate. I conceptualize the street using Goffman's (1969) theory of 'front' and 'back' performance regions. The street is emphatically 'front' as a site of onstage, public performance. The street signifies motion and an exit towards free and parallel realities. Çelik, Favro and Ingersoll (1996) claim the *death of the street*. Since the mass production of cars the *street* has been reconfigured as less a site for cultural politics and more a conduit of travel (Çelik, Favro and Ingersoll 1996). The street signifies cultural adventure, experimentation and escape. It also most significantly belongs to youth (Barker 2006).

As a figurative and physical space, the street borders and demarcates the parental home, the suburb and city. In the 1960s, the street was the pulse of a youth generation, and the arena where democracy was participatory, where theatre and music lived and where the communal thrived (Perry 1985). As Lipsitz comments,

> During the sixties, large numbers of middle-class white youths raised in suburban subdivisions and surrounded by superhighways rediscovered the energy and intimacy of the urban street. (Lipsitz 1994: 213)

The street became the living room of the counterculture. It was where people coalesced, and in both senses of the word, found each other. For the counterculture the street represented that which was simple, level, untouched, a completely open and blank canvas (Chafe 1986). It represented a magnet for youth, a space where it could carve out its own identity, establish their own settlement, causing so many to flock to the Haight in the Summer of Love (Selvin 1999). It was the preeminent site of carnival. It was the home of rock. Sander (1973) provides a vivid recount of what the street signified to the youth counterculture of the sixties:

> Whatever it was that was making us so unhappy pulled us toward the street. It was the only way out and it was completely open. The street was the place to meet kindred souls of every physical description, the place to score dope, the place to hang out and find out what was happening…It was where we lived, learned, worked, played, taught and survived; it was where you orientated yourself among it all. Naturally, it was the best place that anyone who wanted to could find and play and make and go to hear music. (Sander 1973: 9-10)

The street is similarly a hugely important metaphor for rock culture. The most notable use of street is by Bruce Springsteen, whose songwriting makes a near constant reference and whose band derives its name[2]. The street is the conduit for the performance and expression of youth, as it was the stage of the San Francisco Mime Troupe, Diggers and Yippies and platform for political insurgency, marches, and speeches. It is also the stage for parade, party, and carnival (Da Matta 1991). The counterculture did in some part, though temporarily manage to reclaim the streets, though the violence and rage of Chicago in 1968 would do much to negate this claim.

Most importantly the street represented the uncultured, where imagination could run free. It conferred an identity that was organic and unencumbered by the rites of consumerism

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[2] *The E-Street Band.*

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and fashion (Lipsitz 1994). As an open and empty space the street is representative of

material impoverishment and homelessness. This accounts for its appeal to the Haight

hippie, yet so much also the allure or necessity, for a less privileged tribe of American for

whom the street symbolized abandonment, marginalization and isolation. The beatific

and distinctly bourgeois theatrics of street carnival, faux-poverty, and harmonious

communality gave way to a culture of despair, rejection, crime and rape (Hoskyns 1997).

The counterculture's use of the street as a site of shared cultural endeavor, peace and

possibility was entirely unrepresentative. After the Summer of Love the Haight-Ashbury

was revealed as a play-site for baby-boomers.

The counterculture was deeply classist, sexist and particularly old-fashioned and in many

respects replicated dominant social conventions (Burner 1997). Whilst members of the

sixties counterculture promulgated and practiced communality, free love and cultural

abandon, its consequence-free environment was financed by a Western capitalist

economy. The counterculture's spirit of egalitarianism seems as knowingly utopian as the

inaugural address of John F. Kennedy who rallied America in saying,

> Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the
> ocean depths, and encourage the arts and commerce. (20th January 1961)[3]

Togetherness, so much a recurring theme of the counterculture, was far less the

intimation of social inclusion and community, and more the propaganda of a dominant

cultural discourse. The correlation between counterculture and commerce, political

activism and the Oval office is really not so surprising. The student politicos of Berkeley

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[3] Source: The Avalon Project at Yale Law School

and Columbia were of the same privileged ilk as the original Haight hippie, the only difference being that the latter was a university drop-out (Braunstein & Doyle 2002).

The counterculture pioneered new cultural and performative spaces. In this context the *street* remains a vital means of negotiating the diversity of subcultural discourse. It is the chalk face or 'front' for cultural performance and the birthing pool of alternative cultural subjectivity (Goffman 1969).

I have referred to the street as the cultural veins or aqueduct of America and this is something which deserves fuller mention. Conceptually the street serves as a social and economic tributary. Streets are canals of motion, allowing the traffic of humans and goods between one place and another (Kostof & Tobias 1991). They link social and economic hubs and unite what otherwise would be disparate and unconnected. The street is the basis of the temporal social, cultural and economic network. Yet it is also that which delineates, separates and stratifies. Zip-codes indicate wealth and status as they do poverty. They locate areas of affluence and privilege in as much areas of deprivation. They are potentially as much instruments of liberation as incarceration, as much about the public as private (Shields 1992a). The street is a route to somewhere as much as it is nowhere; as much a barrier as a 'free'way (Çelik, Favro and Ingersoll 1996). Littered with the same inconsistencies and contradictions as the counterculture the street is nonetheless a potent signifier of culture and subculture. Haight and Ashbury streets, as much as Madison Avenue are indicative of the cultural value and weight of signification that the street elicits and holds. McKay (1996) claims,

One central ways in which cultures of resistance define themselves against the culture of the majority is through the construction of their own zones, their own spaces. These can be distinguished in part through the subcultural elements of music, style, or favoured drugs (if any- there usually are), but space itself is vital. (McKay 1996: 7)

The street is a site of *bricolage*, where specific countercultural subjectivity grows. In the case of the San Francisco hippie, two streets blended to create a space where a rock orientated tribe creatively disassembled and recast cultural conventions. In the 1960s, Haight and Ashbury streets were the compound from which a cultural renaissance of sorts emerged, where an albeit, exclusive and classist togetherness was forged and where the carnival of music and drugs facilitated a neo-tribe. As a late 1960's memoir by a Haight habitué suggests:

> We were held together by our own good vibrations and with the rise of the Sound, we were drawn into a family. The Fillmore and Avalon of 1966 radically changed our language, our interests and our lives; from a goal directed, school directed way of living, we'd moved to a lifestyle directed way by our music and acid. Acid and the bands became the loci of our lives. Saturday night became the center around which the rest of the week was left to move; reminiscing about the last, planning for the next. All day Saturday spent in preparation, collecting flowers, buying new costumes, buying and selling dope, getting super stoned and listening to music. (Kessler 1969: 64)

This also suggests how simplistic and superficial the counterculture could be, with the week spent as a dress rehearsal and countdown for weekend hedonism. Kessler's account also hints at a 'weekend' or 'tourist' counterculture, with the week representing an obsolete subjective experience and the weekend its reprieve. Whilst a 'drop-out' motif is abundantly clear, the countercultural lifestyle 'directed by our music and acid' is not. Was there anything beyond 'getting super stoned and listening to music'. The next section discusses two types of subculture; one 'fake' and one 'real'. These entirely subjective and, in part, artificial contexts of culture, are fundamental in understanding the

central antagonism separating anti-hegemonic subcultures from dominant cultural forms,

and as a driver stimulating new forms of countercultural carnival.

7.7 'Fake' / 'Authentic' Counterculture

The American counterculture was exclusive. It was unmistakably the preserve of white

middle class America. Much like rock culture it was also emphatically male orientated.

Bohemia, or the image of bohemia was a cultural extravagance for those who could

afford it. Counterculture for the millennium generation of American youth is explicitly

about fashion and style (Shields 1992b). Youth's engagement with countercultural

practice in the early 2000s seems mainly to be fleeting, weekend or touristic (McKay

2000). This returns me to the incorporation thesis and suggests two types of

counterculture: one real and one fake. As Frank claims:

> ...from its very beginnings down to the present, business dogged the
> counterculture with a fake counterculture, a commercial replica that seemed to
> ape its every move for the titillation of the TV-watching millions and the nation's
> corporate sponsors. (Frank 1997: 7)

Consumer culture or as the enervation of cultural 'authenticity' works in tandem with the

innovation and realization of authentic, organic versions of cultural creativity. As such

the theory of co-optation is problematic because it claims counterculture is a total

ideology (Lipsitz 1994). This is a difficult proposition because counterculture is

inseparably joined to the dominant culture. As a model of resistance it serves less to form

an autonomous whole but becomes a niche or tributary of the mass society. It is

ostensibly a reflective means and oppositional critique of dominant forms of culture,

which stimulates renewal and innovation (Barber 2006).

Youth as counterculture provided colour, drama and energy revivifying and countering

the charge of the pallid conformity of 1960's adult America. This is effectively

dramatized in the 1998 film *Pleasantville* where the monochrome of 1950s suburbia is

invigorated and infused with bursts of Technicolor that correspond to the onscreen

presence of young actors.

There are of course those, such as the punk movement, who deny the importance of the

1960s counterculture and that despite its spectacle the counterculture's cultural

contribution was limited (Marwick 2000). Echols (2002) suggests:

> ...most histories of the period make only passing mention of the counterculture.
> When not scournful or mocking, most accounts are clueless, rarely much better
> than what appeared at the time in glossy magazines like Time, which came up
> with such gems as hippies 'scorn money- they call it bread' (Echols 2002: 17)

The punk movement criticized the hippies for not being radical enough, as idle and

idealistic grazers on the surplus of middle class affluence. Whilst the counterculture

bemoaned the material extravagance and profligacy of sixties' America, it did little to

generate other types of material resources that might advantage those genuinely poor and

with whom it claimed solidarity. In this instance the only evidence of countercultural

success was commercial. Whilst vehicles of hip culture such as the *Whole Earth Catalog*

disseminated strategies for environmentally responsible living, countercultural self-

sufficiency and autonomy, these are nonetheless aligned to an exploitative capitalist

system. While the *Whole Earth Catalog* sold over a million copies, Celestial Seasonings

founded by hippies in 1971:

> ...sold $16 million worth of natural teas and herbs annually by the end of the
> decade; one of their founders was a millionaire at age twenty-six. (Anderson
> 1994: 195)

It becomes increasingly difficult to separate what Frank (1997) refers to as the 'fake' and

the 'genuine' counterculture as the narrative and performance of both are so tightly

interwoven. Every performative aspect of the counterculture that I have considered was

marketable.

The counterculture as hip culture was sold through t-shirts, buttons, posters, drugs and

music. Drug paraphernalia and head shops proliferated and in *Steal This Book* (1971),

Abbie Hoffman gave advice on how to deal dope (Anderson 1994). Indeed, the Haight-

Ashbury's own *Psychedelic Shop* was one of the first, before the *Love Burger* vans rode

in, to commodify the counterculture. Perhaps most tellingly, the rock festival itself, the

site of carnival was itself indicative of the unavoidable binary of commercial and organic

hip culture. Festivals of love were synonymous with festivals of profit. Even Woodstock

(1969), which spawned utopian fantasies of a materially free *Woodstock Nation*, was

originally conceived as a profit making venture. After Woodstock (1969) the

countercultural press lambasted the duplicity of the rock statesman as entrepreneur:

> A whole swarm of sideburned entrepreneurs is preparing to capitalize on the hip
> culture's twin addictions: rock music and tribal gatherings...freaks are getting
> more and more uptight with the rampant shucksterism involved in most of the
> festivals. (*Planet* 15th June 1969)

The counterculture failed to permanently invert the System it claimed to so virulently

oppose. In many respects, the hippies mirrored, rather than resisted, dominant cultural

ideology and practice. Free concerts, ethical and environmentally responsible

consumption (precursor to many of the alternative 'organic' styled consumable ranges

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populating contemporary supermarket shelves) and anti-materialist products were key

components of hip capitalism. In one of its greatest contradictions, 'antimaterialism sold

very well to the right audiences' (Lipsitz 1994: 224). The counterculture's rock music

was one such countercultural strand confused by its supporters as a rejection (yet

reaffirmation) of dominant culture. With the commercial infestation of rock music in the

1980s and the transition of *Rolling Stone* from the voice of counterculture to a heavily

corporate magazine, rock musicians simultaneously paraded huge wealth whilst enacting

a subversive, revolutionary rhetoric. This is best exemplified by Kurt Cobain's[4]

appearance on the cover of *Rolling Stone* (#628) wearing a t-shirt that pronounced

'Corporate rock magazines still suck'. Cobain would also write in his journal:

> We can pose as the enemy to infiltrate the mechanics of the system to start its rot
> from the inside. Sabotage the empire by pretending to play their game,
> compromise just enough to call their bluff. (Cobain 2002: 168)

This is an explicit example of countercultural carnival, whose members perform

unreservedly or at least (self)consciously, albeit antagonistically, within a dominant

cultural matrix. I suggest that this 'antagonistic collusion' is a powerful vehicle for

cultural invention, renewal and change.

Nonetheless, of the many things the hippie counterculture claimed to be, it was not. Its

ambition for total equality, integration and democracy was never met. In its appeal for

sexual liberalism, the counterculture failed to provide a distinct and coherent critique of

dominant discourses of sexuality. There is little to suggest that the hippie's decree of free

love did much to extend the sexual emancipation of women, whilst its repetition of

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[4] Lead singer of grunge band Nirvana.

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dominant gendered roles actually reinforced archetypal gender prejudices and inequalities.

The hippie counterculture was often totalitarian and hierarchical in an objectification of women, almost exclusively middle class and white and intensely narcissistic as demonstrated by its media infatuation. Even the Diggers, the one coterie of counterculture that did achieve some success at living outside the commercial economy and in building a culture of their own, were eclipsed by the media inspired Yippie discussed in Chapter 5.

The Aquarian ambition of the counterculture to be fully multi-cultural was never fully realized. Indeed the youth culture which collected around and formed the rock music scene owed a huge debt to black musical traditions, which it never fully acknowledged (Unterberger 2003). The hippie counterculture was indicative of the contradictions of the world it inhabited. As Farber (1994) comments:

> The counterculture celebrated its contradictions...It throbbed with feeling. It abhorred violence, yet it attracted violence. It rejected technology, but its music depended upon electronics. Its rejection of politics was implicitly political. (Farber 1994: 169)

The rock music of the counterculture was multi-faceted articulating a utopian discourse of tribalism and love, youthful abandon, displacement and hedonism, commercial exploitation and nuclear holocaust (Cavallo 1999). It ranged in remit from Barry McGuire's *Eve of Destruction* (1965), The Doors' *The End* (1967), Bob Dylan's *Like a Rolling Stone* (1965) Country Joe's *Feel-Like-I'm Fixin'-To-Die-Rag* (1967) with the apocalyptic purport 'Whoopee, we're all gonna die' to The Mothers of Invention's

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Absolutely Free (1967). The counterculture's rock music was not only the basis of its

community but the preeminent conduit of its carnival:

> Music flooded the air and the times: folk and protest songs, and then hard rock,
> which in its electronic technology sounded as though it were tapping into the
> nation's raw physical and social power. The music created and defined a public.
> Music became a force not only for destruction of conventions but also for
> cohesion. In whatever way the decade is discussed, the music serves as a
> soundtrack. (Burner 1996: 5-6)

In much the same way that the technology of FM radio programming catered for the

broadcast of albums, and not just singles, in stereo sound, the capturing of sixties' music

within vinyl, CD and digital formats allows the counterculture to be brought alive, as

what Bakhtin (1981) terms 'materials memory'. The remakes and re-releases of seminal

sixties albums operate as 'materials memory' which preserve fragments of the

counterculture and allow for its permeation into contemporary everyday life (Grossberg

1984). Writing in the last decade, Lipsitz commented that,

> In the 1990s, remakes and rereleases of sixties songs pervade the pop charts and
> provide a recurrent motif for television commercials. (Lipsitz 1994: 226)

This is a trend that has continued allowing the sixties counterculture to, albeit

fragmentarily, retain a sense of purpose and relevancy. Moreover, it provides a hugely

important contribution to a network of old and new audiences and accordingly the

coalition of youth and the paternal / maternal. Music is perhaps youth's greatest

commodity and its primary signifier. In the context of the 1960s it was the means by

which youth conceived itself. It continues to do so (Haynsworth 2003). Furthermore the

1960s remains important to the contemporary discourse of youth culture as a genealogical

referent and benchmark of cultural performance and politics. As Lipsitz (1998) suggests,

To many observers of the time, the most important change in American society during the sixties seemed to be the emergence of youth as a distinct political and cultural force. (Lipsitz 1998: 4)

The next section details how contemporary anti-hegemonic subculture occurs as not only an installment, but arguably, the logical conclusion of the sixties counterculture. This section demonstrates how many aspects of the hippie counterculture are loosely borrowed and indiscriminately arranged into a "postmodern" subjectivity. From this, new forms of cultural / commercial carnival and narrative emerge, which continually challenge and reconfigure notions of subcultural youth.

7.8 A Contemporary Counterculture

Subcultural youth's ''postmodern'' pursuit of individualism, mediated through an increasingly sophisticated and ubiquitous culture industry, has rendered any claim to 'authenticity', or self-originating counterculture, as near impossible. Consumerism not experience is the dominant rule for the production of youth's ''postmodern'' subjectivity (Lury 1996). The 1960s demonstrated that factions of American youth were ripe for commercial exploitation. The incorporation of multiple countercultural strains such as hippie, punk and new-raver into a commercial framework has allowed the category of youth to become evermore so fragmentary, heterogeneous and bespoke (Chambers 1987). Yet the enactment of these different stylizations is seemingly different from their initial use. Instead a corporate recycling of hippie or punk cultures turns them into motifs and department store paraphernalia.

> Cultural rubbish, in other words, is subject to being 'picked' and recycled, put to use in another form or context- as hybrid, pastiche, collage, nostalgia (with or without irony), or plain old retread- a process now identified as coterminous with the formation of the 'postmodern' cultural landscape. (Ulrich 2003: 10)

Hippie culture is as such, reduced from a countercultural lifestyle to an expression of fashion. Fashion as one of the most powerful signifiers and most frequent association of the countercultural, is arguably the main conduit by which cultural traditions re-emerge (Willis 1990). It is also of course a principal means of identification, cultural posturing and therefore consumption. As earlier fashion styles, cultural artefacts of bygone eras, reappear in America's shopping malls and on American cultural icons, the past reemerges as a relevant and necessary means of contemporary cultural dissemination. As such the culture industry becomes a nostalgia industry. It appropriates such sixties fashion styles

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such as denim flares, wedges, smock-tops, A-line mini-dresses, knee-high platform boots, and other specific types of tailoring and applies a contemporary interpretation of them. Critically, such styles reoccur as indisputably now, young, cool and hip. The style of 2008 however makes little or no reference to its point of origin, nor why or how specific fashions emerged in the first place. Whilst Wright (1985) and Hewison (1987) criticize the nostalgia industry for creating worthless facsimiles of the past, Samuel (1994) claims that such cultural reproductions, serve an important function, in promoting a popularized cultural heritage, albeit ersatz. Interpretations of collective history are nonetheless disserviced, or at least distracted, by the prominence of one type of cultural narrative which is at best, cursory, and at worst, so partisan and subjective, as to be wholly flawed. The historical specifics or aesthetics, bespoke to the sixties counterculture and re-imagined in contemporary cultural forms, are largely bypassed for what sells best. These commodities are in part, empty or uncontextualised signifiers in the performance of identity (Jameson 1984).

The array of different cultural products available to the 'postmodern' consumer, hints at the multitude of cultural characterizations contained in the 'postmodern' subjectivity. Anyone can dress up to be anything they like. The potential for carnival is endless as cultural inversions become a ubiquitous and arguable accepted component of popular youth subcultures. Cultural consumption allows for chameleon-like identity. Yet this presents problems, not least for the cultural icons leading the cohorts of youth, who are forced constantly to reinvent their image so as to remain up-to if not beyond the minute, and *sin qua non* of cultural innovation.

The incorporation thesis suggests that as soon as a cultural form becomes mainstream it loses its integrity, legitimacy, cultural cache and accordingly its commercial appeal (Hebdige 1988). Many contemporary cultural forms accrue a hipness or cool by parading as antiestablishment and exuding dissidence and rebellion. When I refer to *cultural forms* these should be understood as explicitly subversive. The effect of this is to demonstrate that counterculture has from the time of the 1960s evolved into a marketing paradigm which now dominates, indeed saturates, the culture industry.

> This is why rebels adopt and discard styles as quickly as fashionistas move through brands...In this way countercultural rebellion has become one of the major driving forces driving competitive consumption. (Heath & Potter 2005: 131)

In a similar way the culture industry is explicitly youth orientated or youth designed.

Contemporary countercultural carnival much like the sixties occupies the same struggle of a 'real' and inherently self-originating/organic culture versus a 'fake' and inherently commercial/consumed culture. Whilst youth, as a social category, has come to imply all that is countercultural, the struggle for its authentic self-determination as individual, hip and cool becomes evermore difficult. Spaces of carnival such as the summer music festival are similarly suspected of 'inauthenticity', prompted by strong links with commercial enterprises. The Woodstock Festival of 1999 was indicative of this:

> Thirty years after Yasgur's Farm, Bethel, played host to the likes of Jimi Hendrix and Jefferson Airplane, flight and hotel packages are available to the event and they can be paid for on a Woodstock platinum credit card, along with the $180 cost of entrance. In 1969 it cost $6 to enter for a day...In 1999, even watching at home on pay-per-view TV or on the Internet will set fans back $60. Meanwhile exclusivity contracts have also been sold to soft drinks firms, ice cream sellers and condom manufacturers. (BBC News Online, July 23rd 1999)

Whilst this article provides a sense of quite how integrated commerce is with culture, it is also indicative of a dominant, hyped and nostalgic collective memory which idealizes the sixties a Dionysian, egalitarian and not-for-profit past. The comparison of past and present, the evocation of 'good old days' and an idealized past, is misguided (Coontz 1993). This is however, an all too common treatment. It is a compelling yet wholly flawed narrative. It is furthermore problematic in its assumption that the capitalist system is always exploitative and always guilty of the erosion of culture. Whilst capitalist enterprise is not necessarily virtuous or philanthropic neither does it expressly inhibit processes of cultural self-origination, self-determination and innovation.

7.9 The Marriage of Commerce and Counterculture: Consumer Carnival

I propose that countercultural performance, as oppositional to expressions of authority, is not external to established matrices of governance and commerce but operational within. In this instance subculture is best understood as an important strand of the dominant culture or at least a space where carnival occurs. Effectively for subculture to persist it must do so within the mass society yet for the dominant culture to survive it too must adapt to such countercultural practice. This view of sub-cultural styles impacting upon mass culture is best summed up by Williams (1980):

> ...the dominant culture [may reach] out to transform or seek to transform, them. In this process, of course, the dominant culture itself changes, not in its central formation, but in many of its articulated features. But then in a modern society it must always change in this way, if it is to remain dominant, if it is still to be felt in real ways central in all our activities and interests. (Williams 1980: 45)

Williams (1980) interrogates the claim of the Frankfurt School, principally Marcuse, that cultural incorporation necessarily means co-optation. I suggest like Williams that incorporation is not so straightforward, not so much a one way street. Ambivalence occurs as many counter/sub-cultural enclaves insist otherwise.

> ...their members remain invested in the belief that their own cultural output has value only insofar as it remains marginal with respect to the dominant culture. (Haynsworth 2003: 54)

Iconoclastic performance arises critically as a response to the mass society and the defense of an authentic individualism or as Heath and Potter (2005) claim:

> As an injunction to be true to oneself, to place the cultivation of the self at the forefront of all concerns, 'authenticity' has become the overriding moral imperative of modern life. (Heath and Potter 2005: 276)

This is similarly the case for those at the chalk face of countercultural production, most especially rock musicians who are caught in a stalemate with success and popularization diminishing the credibility of their cultural contribution (Goodman 1998). Whilst marginalization bolsters any claim of 'authenticity', corporate endorsement and the very means of rock music's production weakens its oppositionality. This raises some very important questions relating to the transformative potential of carnival and the correlation between counter and hegemonic culture. Haynsworth (2003) asks,

> ...how authentic and credible are the rantings of punk bands like Green Day, whose music has been embraced and promoted by corporate America?...Can bands like Green Day actually use their celebrity status to invite interrogation of the very system of which they, as major-label rock stars, are a part? (Haynsworth 2003: 43)

The distinction is highly problematic, not least 'because the critique of mass society treats the entire culture as a system of repression and conformity' accordingly 'the number of rebel styles is potentially infinite' (Heath & Potter 2005: 131).

Aspects of the 1960s counterculture survive in the new millennium principally through the marketplace. As Cavallo (1999) suggests, the marketplace exists as a space by which the discourse of counterculture is most prominent:

> The most significant, culturally approved displays of improvised freedom in the United States occur within its largely unrestricted economic marketplace. (Cavallo 1999: 144)

The marketplace is one space of carnival often overlooked particularly by those of a countercultural inclination as Frank (1997) claims:

> Postwar American capitalism was hardly the unchanging and soulless machine
> imagined by countercultural leaders; it was as dynamic a force in its own way as
> the revolutionary youth movements of the period, undertaking dramatic
> transformations of both the way it operated and the way it imagined itself. (Frank
> 1997: 6)

A commercial carnival made a mockery of standard corporate practice, ousting the old

and modernizing American consumer markets. The admen of 1960s Madison Avenue

revitalized a market bereft of imagination and ideas. They incorporated the maxims of the

emergent youth culture into their own business manifesto: individuality, bohemianism

and rebellion, and operated as another facet and further extension of white middle class

affluence (Lury 1996). In this instance counterculture was transmogrified from a white

middle class cultural dalliance into a permanent feature of economic life and an ever

present rationale for consumption. This is one of the greatest legacies of counterculture.

Today, fashionable advertising copy is riddled with rhetoric of rebellion, freedom,

individualism, ubiquitous to the point of imperceptibility. The interiors of Starbucks, like

the products of Microsoft and Apple, are peddled as tools for liberation – freeing up time

for coffee and enabling widened communication through a digital global village. Nike

footwear is advertised on television and radio to the accompaniment of William S.

Burroughs, Iggy Pop and the Beatles. The Prankster's bus *Further*, who for arch-

conservatives is an unsightly reminder of America's unraveling, is a promotional device

for Coca Cola's *Fruitopia* line of products, Ford advertised their *Zetec* car (2006) to the

music from *Hair* and claim a *Summer of Love*. Meanwhile the music industry reinvents

itself with new subversive brands as multiple satellite channels compete as the acme of

contravention and transgression. The content of Dylan's *It's Alright Ma (I'm Only*

Bleeding) (1965) 'it's easy to see without looking to hard that not much is really sacred'

forms a particularly apt expression of corporate carnival. Using Williams' (1980) two-

way model of incorporation, consumer culture is an important and ever expanding site for

countercultural performance:

> For the young people looking for signs and symbols of a lifestyle which expresses
> their generation-specific meanings, the American popular culture has presented
> itself as one big 'self-service store'. (van Elteren 1994 in McKay 1997: 37)

In this instance the conspicuous consumption of culture forms the primary facilitator

behind the production and maintenance of youth subcultures.

The presupposition of carnival is that it is created as a communal rite. However, this is

not always realistically attainable. Lipsitz (1994) claims that,

> Presumptions of a common community with a mutuality of values pervaded
> festival rock concerts no less than they did political mass demonstrations. (Lipsitz
> 1994: 215)

However Lipsitz never actually says what these values were, never mind that the notion

of common community is entirely speculative. Whilst the Human Be-In was intended as a

Gathering of Tribes, the joining of Berkeley politico and Haight hippie, the two groups

were shown to be far from inseparable. Furthermore the Be-In is less remembered as a

decisive joining of political and countercultural factions and more as a lysergic funfair.

The irony is of course that events such as the Trips Festival, Acid Tests and Be-In were

whilst based upon a principle of communality decidedly centered upon the exploration

and location of the self.

The L.S.D trip is unmistakably an introverted and self directed adventure. That it may

and has occurred within the communal is as such inconsequential. This raises serious

questions about how communal, participative and integrationist the counterculture

actually was and to what extent carnival can be.

How fully participative is the rock festival-goer? What is their interaction with other

festival revelers bar the sharing of a communal camping space? Arguably the cult of

individualism has enervated the potential of carnival. Bellah (1986) refers to this as a

plague of individualism invading American life, that:

> ...turns out to mean being left alone by others 'without' any purpose to
> involvement with others except individual satisfaction. (Bellah 1986: 150)

The difficulty in legitimating countercultural carnival, as it is now most commonly

experienced on the summer festival circuit, is that it never really transfers the utopian

ideals of communality into reality. It fails to reach Artaud's ideal of the theatrical

experience portrayed as:

> ...life lived with 'authenticity'. Life without lies, life without pretense, lie without
> hypocrisy. Life which is the opposite of role-playing. (Artaud: 1970: 58)

Even here the San Francisco Diggers failed. In their attempt to dismantle the barrier of

performer and spectator they only managed to transfer the theatre from one realm to

another, from the proscenium to the street. The failing of countercultural carnival is that it

never moves beyond performance. The transformative power of performance is that

which remains rooted to the performative space. In this instance the rock festival as the

principal site of carnival becomes little more than a holiday location, cultural conference

or advertising forum. As Pareles (2003) claims:

> Festivals are now being curated, promising the coherence of an art gallery show
> or museum exhibition...festivals offer a chance to discover what's actually hip,
> and to share the thrill with a few thousand strangers. (Pareles 2003: 14)

I find the notion of a stable, coherent and fixed anti-hegemonic youth subculture difficult

to envisage. Just as the sixties counterculture was an umbrella term for an uncertain

amalgam of disparate cultural actors 'to find symbolic shapes for their social and spiritual

discontents and hopes' so is it impossible to claim that contemporary counter/sub-

cultures are unified and stable groups (Clecak 1983: 18). Indeed the very concept of the

group intimates cohesion, connectedness and a firm identity. It seems to me however

very difficult empirically to verify the lines of delineation that accord subcultural groups

their distinction from the mainstream. Like the sixties counterculture, subsequent anti-

hegemonic youth subcultures have been too transitory and faddish to claim legitimacy as

an 'authentic' subset of society. I agree with Bennett (1999) who claims that:

> ...so-called youth 'subcultures' are prime examples of the unstable and shifting
> cultural affiliations which characterize late modern consumer-based societies.
> (Bennett 1999: 605)

The process of cultural renewal, so integral to carnivalesque, occurs as what Shields

(1992) refers to as a 'post-modern' persona', that interacts and moves through different

'site specific' gatherings. Accordingly for the 'post-modern' persona', the group is less a

fixed point of cultural membership. Instead it becomes one part of a series of cultural

identities or one site of cultural experience. Group identity is far from permanent nor

unified, it is instead a succession of interactions or identifications which like the sixties

counterculture forms 'a dramatic personae- a self which can no longer be simplisitically theorized as unified' (Shields 1992a: 16).

Countercultural groups are thus much closer to what Maffesoli (1996) refers to as *tribus* or 'tribes'. Maffesoli argues that the tribe is,

> ...without the rigidity of the forms of organization with which we are familiar, it refers more to a certain ambience, a state of mind, and is preferably to be expressed through lifestyles that favour appearance and form. (Maffesoli 1996: 98)

Tribes, or what Hetherington (1992) refers to as 'neo-tribes', provide a conceptual framework from countercultural carnival can be understood. Neo-tribes are indicative of the temporal nature of collective identity. As social actors move constantly between different sites or groups of identity in a quest for otherness so carnivalesque occurs. Contemporary countercultural carnival takes place as an array of different *lifestyles* which are just as easily worn as discarded, echoing the carnivalesque cycle of death and renewal. The plethora of different styles of summer music festival, from rock and dance to folk is suggestive of the multiplicity of the neo-tribe. *Lifestyle* however should not be confused with a *way of life*. The latter was the evocation of the hippie culture and the cause of its contestation. Bennet (1999) describes lifestyle as,

> ...the sensibilities employed by the individual in choosing certain commodities and patterns of consumption and in articulating these cultural resources as modes of personal expression. (Bennett 1999: 607)

Whilst the hippie counterculture sought a *way of life* it was arguably never more than a lifestyle or what Kellner (1992: 158) calls a 'freely chosen game', or a reflection of a specific way of life. Therefore whilst the hippies claimed to enact a way of life which

was materially impoverished, communal and tribal their effect was less grand providing instead a reflection of Black and Native American cultures.

Events such as the Human Be-In were less a revolutionary ontological manifesto and more a parade of behaviours tried out by a white middle class neo-tribe. A munificent and affluent society was the basis that allowed such carnival. According to this argument sixties counterculture was at once the facilitator and product of corporate carnival. This is not to suppose that counterculture is not effectively oppositional. Indeed as Pfeil (1988) suggests youthful rage at authority has the potential to evoke 'historically new and progressive social forces' (Pfeil 1988: 396). What I claim however is that culture and commerce may be situated in a constant cycle of carnival, a constant process of revolution, renewal, denunciation, *billingsgate*, self-mockery and death. Cultures of resistance are those that expose cultural and corporate myths yet serve to create afresh new ones.

Hebdige (1979) argues that,

> Subcultures are therefore expressive forms but what they express, in the last instance, is a fundamental tension between those with power and those condemned to subordinate positions and second class lives. (Hebdige 1979: 137)

The sixties counterculture, however, was not so much a critique of class. It offered a distinctly bourgeois and privileged lifestyle. Accordingly the hippies had far more to do with corporate carnival than they ever would have cared to claim. Critically, what the hippie counterculture did signal and prompt was the availability of different lifestyle choices. It applied a tie-dye to cultural choice. I claim that it contributed to what Willis (1990) calls 'cultural emancipation':

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> If it ever existed at all, the old 'mass' has been culturally emancipated into popularly differentiated cultural citizens through exposure to a widened circle of commodity relations. These things have supplied a much widened range of symbolic resources for the development and emancipation of everyday culture. (Willis 1990: 18)

The counterculture demonstrated the fluidity of youth neo-tribes and their inseparable binary with business. As Hebdige (1979) attested:

> Each subculture moves through a cycle of resistance and diffusion and we have seen how this cycle is situated within the larger cultural and commercial matrices. (Hebdige 1979: 130)

So counter and sub cultures can never be fully independent of the dominant culture. If they were their critique would be largely obsolete. They are 'more usefully regarded as mutations and extensions of existing codes rather than the 'pure expression of creative drives' (Hebdige 1979: 131). These occur through carnival which Lachmann (1988) argues, 'offers a permanent alternative to official culture' even if it 'ultimately leaves everything as it was before' (Lachmann 1988: 125).

Carnival as counterculture succeeds as a process of constant cultural (re)invention which in turn furnishes a kaleidoscope of lifestyles, subjectivity and the culturation of neo-tribes. The sixties counterculture like so many other cultural phenomena which are held as mystic, exotic, troublesome and other are in fact seamlessly interwoven into the fabric of the mass society, its discourse and practice. Nehring's (2003) commentary of rock culture is useful when he describes:

> What sounds like irredeemable noise to the uninitiated is in fact a deliberate commentary on the cacophony of the rest of our culture- what passes for normal. (Nehring 2003: 69)

This is counterculture. This is carnival.

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7.10 Final Remarks

In summary, this chapter has considered sequentially: the 'postmodern' 'branded' self; advertising and assimilation; commercial 'cool' and youth as commodity; street carnival; fake versus authentic counterculture; contemporary counterculture and consumer carnival.

I have argued that Western, anti-hegemonic counterculture is not separate from dominant capitalist culture, but an integral part and expression of it, which is constantly recycled. The Beats, Hippies, Diggers and Yippies, discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, did not exist in a cultural vacuum. Instead, their performance offered an important commentary of the mass society which continues to be replayed, though perhaps now in more sophisticated technological and commercial ways.

The hippie counterculture, most especially through its music, demonstrated that cultural expression and subjectivity are in constant flux and continually competing against pigeonholing or mainstream absorption. I argue that the performance of the Beats, Hippies, Diggers and Yippies is replayed in a 'postmodern' context that evinces counterculture as a process of constant cultural reinvention and *bricolage*; enriching and challenging social perceptions and ways of living.

The carnival of the American counterculture provides a case-study of cultural antagonisms, between what I have considered as self-originating and self-derivative; and as manufactured and branded. The 'postmodern' predicament of youth, I suggest, is a

struggle against a commercial mediation of culture, for which it is inescapably a part, and a need for self-determination. Against the imposition or threat of one-dimensionality, 'postmodern' cultural (and commercial) actors enlist previous forms of countercultural carnival to facilitate a sense of individuality and uniqueness. Forms of countercultural carnival, such as fashion, music and visual art, are used to dispel the perception of an increasingly formulaic and predictable cultural landscape. As such, the theatre of post-war American bohemia is not only a pertinent reminder of cultural innovation, but a visible characteristic of anti-hegemonic countercultural, mainstream and commercial practice.

My discussion of the Beats and Hippies, Diggers and Yippies offered a glimpse into the trajectories of anti-hegemonic counterculture and its struggle to remain 'authentic' and outwith the dominant cultural sphere of mass society. I have argued in this chapter that anti-hegemonic counterculture is coterminous with mass society. The oppositionality of counterculture facilitates cultural ferment and diversifies cultural understanding and behaviour. However, it is not only counterculture that is anti-hegemonic. The commercial world can at least appear so too. This leads me to argue that notions of 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' culture are misconceived. Instead, I suggest there are vacillations between what is self-originating and local and that assimilated and global. This is the fundamental distinction separating the localized hippie culture of the Haight Ashbury and the popularized, mythologised media abstraction of it, epitomized by the Summer of Love.

In this chapter, I concentrated on the ephemeral yet recurring nature of countercultural

trends, the persistence of some cultural memes and their extrapolation as commercial

signposts. I argue that the 'postmodern' self, is alive with the performative influences of

post-war American bohemia. A recent article, in the mainstream press, contemplating the

legacy of the Beats, draws the same conclusion:

> . . . we're all a little bit Beat nowadays, having absorbed plenty of the liberal
> attitudes and hedonistic ways they pioneered. The Beat mix of hedonism, self-
> destruction and art is alive in the likes of Amy Winehouse and Pete Doherty. And
> you could say the blog is the perfect Beat mode of communication: a chance to
> pour out your feelings without stopping for reflection. (Landesman 2008: 6)

The performative strategies of sixties carnival, 'hedonism, self-destruction and art',

survive as cultural dynamics intimating an inverted, reconfigured cultural landscape.

These are invaluable resources, which equally shape and undermine types of cultural

expression and nurture a sense of belonging and disaffiliation. From this a 'postmodern'

subjectivity evolves, which performs through technological, commercial and self-

innovating (artistic) ways. This, I argue, is the constant (re)deployment of

countercultural / commercial schemes of carnival.

The next chapter is the conclusion to this study and the themes of anti-hegemonic youth

counter/sub-culture and dramaturgy.

Chapter 8
Conclusion

In the course of this thesis I have addressed questions and claims of cultural 'authenticity' / artificiality, commercial co-optation and the assimilation of counter / sub- culture into a paradigm of mass consumption. I have situated these as the principal lines of inquiry which surround and constitute the discourse of youth and subculture and the emergence of various neo-tribes.

I have used the 1960s counterculture as an invaluable historical vantage point facilitating an understanding of cultures of resistance and the business of youth. Furthermore I have discussed the standard thesis which considers the 'authentication' of counterculture as a culture of resistance and as an autonomous and self-derivative construct as against a product of commodification or repressive desublimation (Marcuse 1964).

An appraisal of the 'authenticity' of subcultures in an era of postmodernism is highly problematic not least for the nature of their production. The distinction between the subculturally 'real' and that which is not is hindered by a mediascape accused of substituting one form of cultural 'authenticity' for its own. The popularisation and public endorsement of such media stereotypes allows their legitimisation as the de facto, 'authentic' cultural form (Redhead 1993).

In this instance the 'authenticity' of subcultural performance is measured by an individual's ability to finance such a lifestyle, to consume, and successfully interact with the materialistic signifiers that denote subcultural membership (Chambers 1987). 'authenticity' may also be claimed by reference to another's 'inauthenticity' or in other words an inability to consume and parade articles of subcultural group

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membership (Widdicombe and Woofitt 1995). Ironically this process of cultural

consumerism affects the homogenization, mainstreaming and consequent dissolution

of subculture, whereby its members are readily identifiable and replicable via such

cultural articles as clothes and fashion accessories (Hebdige 1988). As such

subcultural *bricolage* occurs without reference to the meanings of its original

deposition. In the context of this thesis, the original articulation of post-modern

subculture was the American counterculture of the 1960s. The dilemma for

contemporary subcultures taking their lead from the sixties is that they may become

mere modes of fashion or as Muggleton (1997) suggests pastiche over parody.

Subcultural membership demands knowledge of and access to specific subcultural

zones, which are predominantly located within the culture industry. Redhead (1990)

claims that youth has become so much a product of these zones as to be indivisible

from them. It is suggested that what is now understood by counterculture is so

removed from any primary account that it becomes entirely superficial (Jameson

1984). In an age of post-modernity, theorists (Jameson 1984, Redhead 1990) have

claimed that the culture industry has cannibalized styles to such an extent as to make

their relational basis entirely invisible and their sentiment fallow. Indeed,

> Contemporary popular culture is merely a seductive sign-play that has arrived
> at the final referent: the black hole of meaninglessness. (Chambers 1987: 5)

I have visited these concerns within the performance of the Beat, the Hippie and

Yippie and the performance of rock music and suggest that despite an availability of

subcultural capital within the mass cultural market, such zones can be nevertheless

niche and elusive. The accrual and performance of specific cultural knowledge

demarcates the cultural neophyte from the thoroughbred and as such the 'authentic'

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from in'authentic' subculturalist. From this point of view the 'authentic' display of resistance is highly stratified and hierarchical.

Such knowledge is limited to a select coterie; these are what I locate as connoisseurs of culture. In the course of this thesis these have been presented as the academic formalisations of the 1960s, the literary works of the Beat Generation, the lysergic testimony of Timothy Leary, and the classic rock of the counterculture. In a contemporary context these connoisseurs are most readily visible as art critics, music critics and theatre and film critics; those who applaud high cultural values and denigrate the commonplace and plastic (Straw 1991). Various lifestyle periodicals, most especially *Rolling Stone*, are indicative of this type of cultural haughtiness. The role of the connoisseur however is deeply problematic in the context of counterculture as it stands against everything the former claimed: amateurism, improvisation and spontaneity. Baudrillard's (1983a, 1983b) theory of post-modern hyperreality, is in this instance useful in locating the cultural connoisseur, as he who extends an 'aesthetic hallucination of reality' (Baudrillard 1983a: 148). The connoisseur in this case provides an extension of the dominant media stereotype and serves as another distraction from the 'authenticity' of counterculture as a source of resistance. The connoisseur is more a point of conjecture where the discussion of subculture becomes ever more uncertain, fragmentary and disorientated (Jameson 1984).

The theory of post-modernity suggests the collapse of boundaries between high and low art, high culture and popular culture through an 'obscene' outbreak of visibility, best evidenced through television (Baudrillard 1983a). Nonetheless certain spaces of

subcultural practice remain privileged and biased such as the rock fogeyism of *Rolling Stone*.

The difficulty therefore, in making my final analysis and assigning a value system to countercultural artefacts, becomes evermore so apparent. Collins (1992) however claims that the instability of post-modernity allows for multiple ways of negotiating the meaning and form of (sub)cultural constructs. I veer more to this than the claims of Jameson (1984) and suggest that subcultural *bricolage* does not necessarily imply the erosion of meaning but that through other combinations and recontextualisations new subcultural meanings occur.

The post-modern dissolution of cultural barriers and the proliferation of various creative industries, many which took root in the 1960s, have facilitated a plenitude of subcultural discourse and the maintenance of a culture of resistance. In event cultural connoisseurship is made fully democratic and available to all. This I claim is the direct effect of the American 1960's counterculture. As arguably the first post-modern *bricoleurs*, the sixties counterculture evidenced through their celebration of multiple identities that culture is 'less a matter of locations with roots than of hybrid and creolized cultural routes in global space' (Barker 2006: 389). Indeed I suggest that subcultures of youth are syncretic and hybridized forms of different cultures from different ages, as was much the case with the hippies. Youth subcultures are what Massey (1998) refers to as,

> ...constellations of temporary coherence (and amongst such constellations we can identify local cultures) set within a social space which is the product of relations and interconnections from the very local to the intercontinental. (Massey 1998: 125)

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This was the basis of the counterculture which although short-lived impacted on a global level and served as the basis from which other subcultures germinated in likeness and hostility. In the latter case it is important to remember that there were some advocates who felt that the counterculture did not go far enough. They complained that the oft touted revolution should have occurred, that the major countercultural protagonists were in event quite feeble, and that the same old capitalist system and bourgeois commercialism survived (Marwick 2000).

Nonetheless, as I make this final address, it occurs to me that the most important aspect of countercultural performance was the application of a heightened mobility of thought, action and word evidenced across ideological, technological and theatrical bounds. This is what allowed the success of carnival. As an eminent chronicler of the 1960s Marwick (2000) suggests that,

> The essence of sixties' developments, it seems to me, is the coming into being of a large number of subcultures and movements, all in some way or another critical of the established order or things, all expanding and interacting, and ultimately permeating society. (Marwick 2000: xiii)

This notion of interaction and permeation I believe is absolutely fundamental to the discourse of sixties counterculture and is that which frames my understanding and application of the theory of carnivalesque. Certain social and cultural territories that were deemed entirely separate if not antithetical I have shown in the course of this study to have been familiar and co-dependent. That which was countercultural and that which was corporate are prime examples of a relationship which was never as disparate as some such as Marcuse (1964, 1969) suggested. Indeed I am much more inclined to go along with Marwick (2000) who preferences a 'measured judgment'

over Marcuse's (1964) 'repressive tolerance' in consideration of the relationship of commerce and culture.

The thesis of cultural 'authenticity', which separates cultural artefacts into artistic forms and commercial products, I have shown to be distinctly unhelpful in assessing the value of the subcultural as a means of resistance. It seems to me a gross misconception to situate subculture as outside of the mass society. Indeed this thesis attests the very opposite. Whilst San Francisco was a model of deviancy it was nonetheless inseparable from America as a whole. The Beats, Hippies, Yippies and countercultural rock stars were similarly integral parts of the dominant society. In the latter's case their commercial stardom ensured this. Lastly, as a member of the American Academy, much of Marcuse's work was subsidized by government funded research councils. This demonstrates that counterculture, mainstream culture, commercial culture and forms of established authority overlap and interact. Indeed,

> ...there was no sharp, dialectical divide between a commercialised, mainstream culture and a socialistic, non-profit making culture. (Marwick 2000: xiii)

Instead what the 1960s demonstrated was a crossover of different cultural and commercial practices and the dissolution of cultural hierarchies and barriers. The counterculture evidenced how various dramaturgical strategies such as street theatre, media freaking and of course rock music could combine in a process of continuous cultural innovation. The counterculture similarly adapted and reversed Debord's (1967) theory of Spectacle, employing cultural practices as spectacle critiquing the dominant society. As sites of subcultural activity, Haight-Ashbury and the Human Be-In evidenced a collective participation in creating specific subcultural meanings and

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values challenging the dominant whilst at the same time providing a source of spectacle for the mass media.

As an example of carnivalesque the sixties counterculture succeeded, in part, in the obliteration of dominant cultural barriers causing disparity of gender, ethnicity and class. The radicalism of the Haight hippie and San Franciscan Digger, their resistance to and attack of the prevalent consumer culture, cultivation of a paradigm of communality, togetherness and 'do your own thing', and a living for the now, were all aspects of subculture that have been translated as integral facets in the construction of youth's subcultural discourse.

The hippie emphasis of individualism transferred into youthful entrepreneurship as bookshops, cafes and art galleries proliferated and continue to hold mass popularity. This spirit of individualism served to harness what Flack (1971 and Feuer (1969) defined as a 'youth movement' and 'generational divide', respectively. Yet the ascent of youth culture also saw its transition into a lifestyle, as more of a frame of mind or fashion than biological determinant and the permeation of it as a cultural signifier. Marwick (2000) claims that,

> Such was the importance of youth and the appeal of the youthful lifestyle that it became possible to be 'youthful' at much more advanced ages than would ever have been thought possible' (Marwick 2000: xviii)

The counterculture's use of technology evidenced within communications, entertainment, travel and even the contraceptive pill allowed for a more mobile, permissive and participatory culture. This in turn prompted some such as Matusow (1984), Bloom (1987) and Mansfield (1997) to speak of the unravelling of America and the erosion of the fundamental moral tenets of American life. These authors seemed to rather forget the counterculture's exposure of state sponsored aggression,

epitomised by Mayor Daley and Chicago '68, which they upheld as pillars of American order, than endorse it as an important chapter of social development.

The counterculture however failed to live up to its fully participative claims. The issue of social class was never really overturned. The counterculture remained decisively middle class. This was best evidenced at the ill-fated Rolling Stones 'free' concert at the Altamont Speedway in 1969, where working class Hell's Angels and a majority middle class crowd clashed violently (Gair 2007). Drug use changed from social narcotics such as L.S.D and marijuana to the solitary and private heroin. At the same time, reported psychological trauma caused by bad acid trips diminished the utopian claims of L.S.D (Lee & Shlain 1992). Finally as rock musicians accumulated more fame, so did a millionaire culture emerge which distanced them from their fans. Bands such as the Grateful Dead would no longer be able to live as one with their community.

Nonetheless the 1960's American counterculture did succeed as an effective and significant challenge to majority culture and as an example of checking against cultural hegemony and imperialism. Melucci (1996) suggests that,

> In order to understand the modern self with its many faces we must alter our point of view, and adopt a way of seeing through which it becomes possible to grasp relational connections and learn from accumulated experience. (Melucci 1996: 4)

This is what the counterculture provided and what carnivalesque achieves. I use the American counterculture as a starting point from which other cultures of resistance are tenable and known and accordingly from which a process of carnivalesque is made possible. This persists today with the profusion and permeation of multiple subcultural, lifestyle choices which challenge a one dimensionality of culture and

assert cultural hybridity and heterogeneity. In the post-modern context, carnivalesque

is ubiquitous and not necessarily defined to one specific subcultural space. The

carnivalesque is visible as the modern global city, a space of constant cultural

performance, death and renewal. Indeed,

> ...the nature of the city is not to be found simply in its economic base: the city
> is primarily a social emergent. The mark of the city is its purposive social
> complexity. (Mumford in Miller 1986: 107)

In a post-modern context the ascent of the city and the urban population which is,

'projected to reach 58% of the world population by 2025'[1] as a space within an

archipelago of global communication and performance asserts the primacy of carnival

and the industries which respond to it. Morford (2007) writing in the San Francisco

Chronicle, attests to the impact and legacy of counterculture as it occurs in a

millennium context:

> Look around: we have entire industries devoted to recycled paper, a new
> generation of cheap solar powered technology and an Oscar for 'An
> Inconvenient Truth' and even the soulless corporate monsters over at famously
> heartless joints like Wal-Mart are now claiming that they really, really care
> about saving the environment. (www.sfgate.com)

It seems to me that the carnival of the Haight-Ashbury is now located across the many

international cities of the world. London, New York, Paris, Rome, San Francisco are

all home to a multitude of popular festival, both tacit and overt. These global cities are

in a constant state of reinvention. Writing almost one hundred years ago Park (1915)

understood the city as a site of perpetual cultural transition:

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[1] www.unesco.org

> Cities, and particularly the great cities, are in unstable equilibrium. The result is that the vast casual and mobile aggregations which constitute our urban populations are in a state of perpetual agitation. (Park 1915 in Gelder & Thornton 1997: 22)

Carnival is accordingly known as a lifestyle choice in the everyday and also as events explicitly distinguished as such, most obviously summer music festivals and street carnivals; the importance of which are incontestable as,

> ...a way of proposing, trying to create, a truly vital cultural politics, one which has involved thousands of people and their pleasures. (Blake 1997: 191)

The technological developments of the age of counterculture, most notably air travel, are now also those which allow youth, much like the Pranksters' trip of discovery through America, and Kerouac's 'On the Road', a means of constructing a cultural identity and repertoire of cultural knowledge. This is what Desforges (1998) calls 'checking out the planet'.

Much then of what the American 1960s represents is as much 'about "social construction"...[as] collective history' (Pinkster 1997: 21). The sixties' counterculture and subsequent subcultures operate as significant, 'elements in the process of generational self-awareness, both at the original time of occurrence and today, as part of a collective nostalgia' (Eyerman & Jamison 1998: 110).

This thesis has sought to call on what Marwick (1989) defines as the 'witting' and 'unwitting testimony' of an historical event to better situate an understanding of how subcultural identity forms and how cultures of resistance permeate the social grid. From my discussion of a subcultural space- San Francisco and the Haight Ashbury, of

subcultural agency- the Hippies, Diggers, Yippies, and of a subcultural artefact and legacy- rock music, I hope to have evidenced a process of carnival and the evolution of a neo-tribe. There is a very clear link between the 1960s version of counterculture and a modern manifestation harnessed through the re-emergence and recycling of collective memory, cultural space and forms:

> The respective repertoire of cultural performance of the 1960s and the new millennium, though slightly varied and sometimes at odds, shares the same fundamental basis that leads towards collective identity. (Eyerman & Jamison 1998: 138)

Critically, the formation of a collective identity, other than the majority consensus, is the business of counter and sub culture and what drives the culture industry. Across the post-modern mass society the impulse for and availability of processes of self-distinction are evermore so apparent (Florida 2003). The production of individualism, so much the ambition of the sixties, is the ultimate challenge to hegemonic assimilation. I have shown in the course of this thesis how countercultural subjectivities form and reoccur to challenge dominant accounts of culture. As a paradigm of culture resistance, carnival is an infinite cultural process which serves to enlarge the diversity of the performative postmodern self. It,

> ...offers an ongoing challenge to the narrowly conceived forms of reason of the 'public sphere', as well as to modernism desiring to legislate, in an equally imperial way, single standards for all culture. (Docker 1994: 284)

I have demonstrated in the course of this thesis how subculture is committed to a process of carnivalesque, détournement and symbolic inversion which,

> ...inverts, contradicts, abrogates, or in some fashion presents an alternative to commonly held cultural codes, values and norms be they linguistic, literary or artistic, religious, social and political (Babcock 1978: 14)

As the grotesque and as an economy of transgression, carnival situates subculture as an important yet 'privileged locus' of cultural inversion (Da Matta 1991). The discourse of subculture is utopian and counter-hegemonic. It is also, I claim, the reverse. The contradictions, antagonisms and questions of subculture, youth and cultures of resistance continue unabated. The dialectic of liberation and the dialectic of antagonism persist. The impossibility of their conclusion is what accords counterculture its longevity, persistence and status as an invaluable means of social critique and means to locate the post-modern self.

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The Digger Papers: www.digger.org

Haight Ashbury: www.lovehaight.org

Sixties Related Sites: www.altmanphoto.com

www.sixties.net

www.woodstock69.com

www.woodstocknation.org

Online Publication: www.life.com

www.nytimes.com

www.rollingstone.com

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www.uncut.co.uk

Other: www.democracynow.org

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