AESTHETICS IN THE POPULAR CULTURE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to consider three opposing statements regarding aesthetics in our popular culture.

The first statement, often heard among both the younger and older generations, is that the youth of this age are demolishing the old standards of aesthetic taste and are creating a nonaesthetic.

The second statement, more commonly discussed by educated and intelligent second-generation, youth-oriented writers and artists, is that the youth are enlarging the vision and scope of the accepted standard of aesthetic and changing its direction.

The third statement, heard in the discussions of many aestheticians and writers of established reputation, is that the creations of the youth in our popular culture of today are neither new nor nonaesthetic, but merely a continuation of aesthetics as they are accepted.

These three statements will be examined in relation to changes in various art fields. The fact that great social changes have taken place is a necessary primary consideration for the understanding of such aesthetic changes. One statement will be chosen as the most valid of the three.
This thesis will use the dictionary definition of aesthetic, since there are so many variations, according to culture and personality, as to make it impossible to consider all of the alternative meanings. The definition given by Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary is "aesthetic—of or pertaining to the beautiful as distinguished from the moral and especially the useful; as, a purely aesthetic reaction; appreciative of, or responsive to, the beautiful in art and nature; manifesting taste; as, an aesthetic race or age."

Aesthetics have long been discussed and argued over by the social or artistic "elite" of our society. In time past, taste was set in dress, furniture, architecture and music, by the higher social stratum of a given society. In England, this stratum was the lords and earls, the nobility connected by bloodline to the royal family. In many other Western nations this same situation existed. One may ask, "How, pray, did this noble section of society receive its education in the area of aesthetics?" The answer can only be that it received it from the creators of the art. With the coming of printing and the decline of illiteracy, the artist, contrary to what had been true earlier in history, began to be accepted in the circle of social elite, whose members acted as patrons of the arts. Thus aesthetic tastes became linked with the aristocracy.

In England, where a great part of this study will be set, the links between the aristocracy and aesthetic taste have
remained fast. One has only to visit the stately homes of England and compare them with the houses of the lower classes. Such houses as Chatsworth House, home of Lord Derby, which is set in the flowing green hills of Derbyshire, are examples of stately homes. The house is a magnificent grey stone structure, designed originally on classical Greek lines and added to in varying styles from time to time. It contains a wealth of beautiful objets d'art. Many of the ceilings are covered with paintings, and many walls are thick with brocade. China and glass glitter in the light, and period furniture gives an air of elegance. This is one of the homes of England's elite. The taste is aesthetic taste in the accepted sense. Compare it to a home in the nearby town of Matlock. There the same stone is used, but the house, dating from the same period, is much smaller. The windows do not let in as much light, for at the time of building, there was in England a light tax, and people were allowed only the amount of light they could afford. Its decorations consist of brasses. These derive from horse brasses, but are now made in many forms, such as candlesticks, ashtrays and decorative plaques. Also, one may see a plaster statue, painted in gaudy colors, representing a boy or girl engaged in some activity such as fishing or eating cherries. The rich with their stately homes and the poor with their dark cottages are the extremes of the land, and it is among these two sections that the major changes have taken place. England,
long accustomed to rule and representation by its socially accepted betters, finds itself still ruled by them, but not represented by them. Instead, people of working-class origin have struggled in the battle of taste and have won a victory, however temporary. The picture is changing from the bowler-hatted establishment to a more loose-flowing image. As David Frost says,

The bowler-hatted, pinstriped-suited retired colonel with the bristling white moustache served as a satisfactory stereotype; ... It was clear that England was run by him and for him, and that he was the model towards which his less-favored compatriots molded their aspirations. And then suddenly the picture changed. It was not a slow fade, not even a dissolve, but an abrupt cut to a young man with long hair, very little reserve and no sense of propriety or responsibility whatever.¹

Education has come to the working classes and now, rather than have their tastes and mores dictated for them by a class of people with whom they have little in common, they seek to establish their own opinions and tastes and to shake the establishment a little.

This change will be presented in relation to the three basic statements under consideration and in relation to the basic areas of change.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND CHANGES

Social Structure in England in Change

The ruling group of England, the "social elite," often attended the better public schools of Harrow and Eton and the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. These schools have in their long history set up a system which prepares a young man for a position in the government of his country. By tight discipline and an uncompromising attitude they instilled that "British" feeling of superiority into their pupils. In the days when education was for the few rather than for the many, there were few to challenge the aesthetic tastes of the ruling classes. Boys were trained in the classics and girls in the fine arts. An eligible bachelor expected his intended to have among her accomplishments music, drawing and embroidery. The working class could merely stare and wonder.

However, with the Second World War there came a new development. Everybody had to abandon class distinctions temporarily and fight for King and country. Before the Second World War the army had been a copy of the class system of society. The high-ranking officers were graduates from military academies, such as Sandhurst, and commissions could also
be purchased or awarded by the King. It was almost impossible in this system for a conscript to become a high-ranking officer. England had an empire to maintain. In India, the army kept the peace; in Africa and the Middle East the army patrolled. Then came the crash. The European world lay in ruins, full of cities with smoke-blackened, gaping landscapes. In the war the young men of the working class had proved themselves capable of command and had challenged the leaders with their brave actions.

After the war England took a quick look at herself and saw that she was changed. From the generation of children who witnessed the spectacle of war, came a group of English writers who were to play the opening scenes in the drama of aesthetic change. The group was commonly called "The Angry Young Men" because they wrote about the injustice of class, which they saw all around them. Their work has been called "kitchen-sink drama" because of its subject matter. John Osborne is perhaps the name which comes easily to mind in this regard.¹

The aesthetic quality of such work has long been discussed in relationship to the Edwardian idea of literature which immediately preceded it. A good example of Edwardian writing would be End of the Chapter by John Galsworthy, the renowned creator of the Forsyte Saga. "He lay in a room with mullion

¹John Osborne is an English writer. His most famous play is Look Back in Anger, the first angry-young-man play.
windows, an ascetic room in a sixteenth century house, close to the cathedral, whose scent was tempered but imperfectly by the September air coming in.”² Written between the wars, at the end of one age and the beginning of another, the novel portrays the lives and fortunes of upper-class people with some arbitrary attempts at showing their connections with the lower classes. One has a sense of a world which concerned itself with the lower-class people out of a sense of family duty. A comparison of the above quotation with one by Alan Sillitoe will further illustrate the difference in style between the writers.

"To reach the bednight attic, Brian led the three others up through mam and dad's room, then climbed a broad ladder to a kind of loft, a procession of shirts and knickers going up there out of sight."³ These quotations show the difference in writing style and also expose the conditions of the surroundings of the two classes. Another two quotations will illustrate the contrast in the style of living of the two classes.

"Good lobster?" he said.
"Amazing."
"I always come here when I want to be well fed."
"Is that partridge coming, waiter?"
"Yes, milord,"⁴

⁴Galsworthy, p. 175.
from Galsworthy, and

"Come Vera mash the tea. There's sugar and milk and some steak in that bag. If you send Brian out for some bread we can all have summat to eat."\(^5\)

from Sillitoe.

Few writers before the generation of Osborne had cared enough to portray the struggles of the lower class. A notable exception is Dickens. However, the important consideration here is not only the content of the books but how they are written. Dickens handles his descriptions of the working classes with finesse. His descriptions have an air of poetry about them and he uses fine words. Sillitoe and Osborne, however, use the language of the lower class, with its restricted vocabulary, its vernacular overtones and its usage of slang. Galsworthy sets an atmosphere of tea and sympathy. An air of decayed grandeur is observed and one feels as though life is lived at a surface level with little or no plumbing of the depths. In the writing of Sillitoe, there is no attempt to mask the cruder realities of life. Such things as slag heaps, dirty railroad tunnels and refuse dumps become part of the environment of his characters. These people express no shock at such conditions, not even despair, but rather, they are apathetic to the conditions.

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\(^5\)Sillitoe, p. 115.
The question that this new generation of writers raised was whether their type of "kitchen-sink" drama had any aesthetic value. The work of England's Angry Young Men roughly paralleled America's beat generation and the birth of such works as Ginsberg's Howl. These groups of young writers rang down the curtain on the sentiment of Galsworthy and set the stage for the movement towards youth. Their work has been accepted as having aesthetic values and now begins to seem a little archaic compared to some contemporary plays, such as The Beard.

The Emancipation of Youth

The generation which was born just at the beginning or during the Second World War was to form the first youth movement. As Peter Laurie says,

The fifties were the time of the beats, bohemianism, Trad Jazz Clubs; the first beginnings of an inarticulate social system among the young. At a low level of consciousness the situation for a teen-ager then was rather like that after a popular revolution—a sense of freedom and intolerance with overthrown institutions, but at the same time nothing had jelled, no leaders had appeared, those that did rose and fell tumultuously on small waves of local enthusiasm.6

The youth rebelled in one way and clung to the establishment in another. This second generation of youth had grown up to the hard-luck stories of parents who had lived through two world wars and had lost opportunities for education and training because of the Second World War. The youth spent their days

among the bomb-scarred ruins of the war. They were led to expect the worst as far as job prospects were concerned. When they eventually caught a glimpse of the economic life of the community, they found that it was not as bad as it had been represented. Jobs for these post-war teen-agers were easy to find, opportunities were many.

For a while the youth identified themselves with violence. Then, after this second generation of rebels, came the third generation of teen-agers. For this third generation poverty was a thing rarely talked about. The conflicts of the war were already history and since the personal comforts and status of their parents were on the increase, they had little need for conflict in their own lives. The lack of anything to fight for was almost a problem. They became detached. As Peter Laurie puts it, "This period of thrashing rebellion ended in England with the detachment of the teen-ager from adult society."\(^7\) An articulate system of communication had not yet emerged. The young identified themselves by disagreeing with anything the adult population agreed with. It was a quiet revolution with no demonstrations, no sit-ins, but a silent gathering of the forces for the next major offensive on adult culture.

Education was easier to attain for this generation. Schools were improving and it was possible to acquire a

\(^{7}\)Ibid., p. 16.
reasonable job at fifteen and, with it, a sense of freedom. With the job came money and the beginning of teen-age spending power. So a teen-age culture began to emerge, and the term "pop" or popular culture began to be applied to this growing trend. In the opinion of Peter Laurie,

If our education system were effective, there would be no need for the teen-agers to be culturally autonomous. The distinctions drawn between the pop and the real culture only confess the weakness of the real.8

The emancipation of youth came simultaneously with a further dismantling of the class system. The youth began to take over in the area of aesthetics and the arts in general. David Frost says,

Mr. Edward Heath takes over from the fourteenth Earl of Home; the clubs of St. James yield to the coffee houses of Chelsea: Carnaby Street usurps Saville Row; Liverpudlian pop stars week-end at ducal castles; dukes go out to work; ancient universities welcome upstart sons of hobnailed workmen.9

Youth is on the move everywhere. This third generation has found a rallying point and has begun to establish a code and its own teen-age mores. "Swinging" has become the phrase. However, there is more to the image of "swinging London" than the teen scene. Many observers have noted that in times of economic decline, a nation often resorts to a wild gaiety, a frivolous abundance of nonsense and a carefree attitude. Is

8Laurie, p. 140.

this also the case with England? In an article in Life, Gene Farmer notes,

Undue attention to the superficial fads of "swinging England"—miniskirts, long hair, which makes boy-girl distinction difficult—has tended to conceal the country's serious decline with an avant-garde veneer.  

Also, an economic decline is often accompanied by an artistic revival. Are the mod ideas coming out of England linked to this decline? Are the products of this generation aesthetically great or revolting? Opinions vary.

There is a social revolution occurring in England today and the youth with their creations are a part of it. They spend, they experience, they live, and in order for them to do this, their clothes, songs and other art-related fields become the channels of communication. Communication is the name of the game.

CHAPTER III

COMMUNICATION EXPLOSION

The American Angle

According to Marshall McLuhan, we are living in an age of communication explosion. He says, "The medium is the message because it is the medium that shapes and controls the shape and form of human association and action." According to him, an electric light bulb is a medium and a message at the same time. We become overly conscious of the content of a medium and tend to miss completely the message of the medium itself. McLuhan probably is more comprehensible to the youth of today than are many writers they study in school. He speaks of involvement, and this involvement is the world of today's youth. Instant total awareness is a thing of the age.

Media can be divided into "hot and cold." Radio and movies are defined by McLuhan as "hot" media in that they are high definition and, therefore, have a low involvement factor. Telephone, television, and cartoons are described by him as "cool" media, thus creating high involvement because of the

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2Hot means a medium which has a high definition, such as a photograph which can be seen in fine detail. Cool means a medium which has low definition, such as television, which is composed of lines and thus produces a hazy picture without detail.
low definition. Television involves one by the nature of its low definition, and one can hardly expect young people who are accustomed to television to associate it in any way with print.

The "hard" sell and the "hot" line become mere comedy in the television age, and the death of all the salesmen at one stroke of the television axe has turned hot American culture into a cool one that is quite unacquainted with itself.3

There has been an inward turning among the youth, which McLuhan describes as an implosion, rather than an explosion. We live in an electrical age. He says that this modern world of instantaneous media involves all of us at once, so that there is no detachment possible.

Youth instinctively understands the present environment—the electric drama. It lives mythically and in depth. This is the reason for the great alienation between generations. Wars, revolutions, uprisings are interfaces within the new environments created by electric informational media.4

McLuhan says, "Electric circuitry is an extension of the nervous system."5 Man has been accustomed to the book as an extension of the eye. He has become accustomed to the wheel as an extension of the foot. However, this quite sudden extension of his nervous system is too powerful to grasp in the old, logical-sequence manner.

Rational, of course, has for the West long meant uniform and continuous and sequential. In other

3McLuhan, Understanding Media, p. 27.

4Ibid., p. 15.

words we have confused reason with literacy, and rationalism with a single technology. Thus in the electric age man seems to the conventional West to become irrational.6

So it would seem that our electrical environment is more suited to an Eastern way of thought. This confusion seems to be accepted more by the young in our societies. They have lived all their lives in an electrical world. They are not oriented to the visual medium of the book, but the audio-visual medium of television. We cannot escape from this electrical environment. It is all around us. Machines carry us to work, help us with our work, and keep track of our lives. We are surveyed, estimated, categorized and finally filed away by machines. We are electrically surrounded by our inventions. The youth, sensing the adult's failure to comprehend this new environment, are turning to their own explanations. They have pulled themselves together into a group and use the hot media, like radio and phonograph, to communicate a sense of closeness. As McLuhan says,

Our teen-agers in the nineteen-fifties began to manifest many of the tribal stigmata... Now, to the teen-ager, radio gives privacy, and at the same time it provides the tight tribal bond of the world of the common market, of song and of resonance. The ear is tolerant and inclusive whereas the eye is open, neutral and associative.7

A quotation from Peter Laurie will illustrate further.

6 Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media, p. 15.
7 Ibid., p. 302.
On the one hand the written word, which is by long tradition the prime means of communication among grown-ups, will not suit the teen-agers' needs—for several reasons. Both reading and writing are best done alone; the medium does not promote social contact.

In vain the youth tries to bring to the printed page the unified sensorium of television, but print rejects it. So, more and more, one sees an expansion of the teen-age world of visual experiences mingled with auditory and sensory experiences. Yet the mingling of these experiences is not restricted to the youth. The artists, in all fields, react instantly to a new medium. In our age, artists mix media as freely as do the youth.

Two opposing camps are developing, one consisting of the youth, artists, poets, musicians, and those people who are capable of being aware of creativity and of being creatively aware. The opposite camp is mainly composed of those people who think that creativity is all right in its place, which is second to purpose, and the many to whom creativity is an illusive thing which does not exist in their lives. A snobbery of creativity is growing rapidly. Are you in? Do you appreciate the Fugs? Will you walk the streets with green legs, blue lips and pink hair?

The young people who have experienced a decade of television have imbibed an urge toward involvement in depth that makes all the remote visualized goals of usual culture seem not only unreal

but irrelevent and anemic. It is the total involve-
ment in all-inclusivenowness that occurs in young
lives via the television image.9

The Hang-loose Ethic

Marshall McLuhan's philosophy is relevant both to the
American society and to the British. America, however, is
more commercial than Britain and America's social conditions
are linked to her vast commercial enterprises. In a sense
America has always been classless, but only in the sense of
an aristocratic class system. The Protestant ethic has been
the way of life for the past few centuries. A hard day's work
well done and a kind of positive moderation were among its
more somber virtues. There has always been, however, a "lunatic
fringe" and a subterranean stratum of outsiders. This fringe
is the secret of greatness, for without the rebel who believes,
the outcast who conquers, America would have been without many
of her memorable leaders.

A new ethic is spreading rapidly through many sections
of society.

The emerging ethic is hang-loose in a number of
senses but its deep-running feature is that things
once taken for granted as God-given or American-
constitution given--those basic premises about the
world and the way it works--are no longer taken for
granted or given automatic allegiance. In other
words many Americans are hanging a bit loose from
traditional Americana.10

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9 McLuhan, Understanding Media, p. 335.
10 J. J. Simmons and Barry Winograd, It's Happening (Santa
One of the fundamental characteristics of the hang-loose ethic is that it is irreverent. It is in style to repudiate long-held beliefs. It is right to question the establishment. People are asserting the right to differ from the Protestant ethic. Many things which are considered shameful by the majority of the populace are being flaunted and waved as a red rag before a bull. Another aspect of this ethic is the courting of raw experience.

It is important to note that in America those following under the banner of the hang-loose ethic are not all of one type. There are those who have struggled through long training in an Eastern philosophy in order to attain that celebrated final vision. Some are young, full of life and still at an age when spontaneity comes easily. Others come in for a fling, a chance at what they consider the bohemian way of life, before settling down into that red, white and blue All-American, suburban rut. Perhaps a good conclusion for the derivations and motivations of this ethic lie in this quotation:

Perhaps the most curious irony about the hang-loose ethic is that it is distilled from many of the highest ideals of Western man and our national heritage, carried out to their logical conclusion. . . . The irony is not that Americans have failed to teach the upcoming generation but that they have been perhaps too successful in their teaching and now must confront their fervent pupils.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 30.}
A Clear Field for Expression

One may ask where all this discussion of the youth is leading. The answer is that in gaining their emancipation, the youth are giving themselves a free field for expression. Creativity has been the most misused gift in educational circles. For years it has been stifled by teachers and surrendered to the eternal stimulus-response method of teaching. There are now great changes taking place among the youth, in that they are listening to modern poetry in the form of many pop songs and they are viewing modern art in the form of dresses, record sleeves, and pop posters. Everywhere youth are confronted with choices of color and shapes, which make buying a kind of personal expression. They are encouraged to experiment with media and ideas to create their own private worlds of fantasy. All this is weaving a fantastic web of glowing colors and strange depths. The creative person is becoming concerned with involvement in this electric age, and those who feel that they are not creative are being given a chance to experience and appreciate the creativity of others. This emancipation from the tight, restrictive bonds of a grey world to the brightly-colored, switched-on world of now is emancipation indeed. In this new-found freedom, old standards of aesthetic taste are being challenged. People are being swept into the whirlpool of music, sights and sounds that spin around this electrical world in dizzying spirals. This is certainly not
the old aesthetic with its sharply defined edges between one art form and another. Is this a nonaesthetic that is being created? In a letter, Edward Lucie-Smith sums up the argument with this statement.

I don't think this really amounts to the creation of a "nonaesthetic"—however—this is really a self-righteous middle-brow idea.\textsuperscript{12}

It would seem that the youth are defining a new dimension of aesthetic and bending its direction a little.

With the foregoing comments regarding social changes and youth's emancipation in mind, let us turn to a consideration of the art of this contemporary era. First a clear statement about the art of today's derivations, position and exponents is needed before considering the aesthetics. Undoubtedly, today's art is more closely linked with popular culture than ever before. The worlds of advertising and fine art have drawn together into an uneasy allegiance. As Edward Lucie-Smith puts it,

Advertising after being for so long the black sheep of the arts has achieved, in recent years, an eerie pre-eminence. The painters who once upon a time spurned the ad-men, have now become their clients—advertising itself has become a fountain head of pictorial ideas.1

He says that at a recent exhibition of pop art in Liverpool's Walker Art Gallery, it was plain to see that the pop thing is basically a branch of local culture. Pop art's popularity seems to lie in the feed-back situation between mass-media and the art object. We live in an age of mass production. It is

easy to produce an original work of art and then screen print it thousands of times to make it available for the mass market. But, when repeated so many times, does it remain a work of art? Some maintain that once an object is put into mass production and reproduced in another material, then it loses its aesthetic worth and becomes like so many soup cans. But this is the age of the glorification of the soup can. This is an age when the mundane has been raised to the level of a household god. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish where the advertisement ends and the painting begins. However, pop art is popular and it is linked firmly to the popular culture.

Pop art was the first art movement to develop association with the worlds of pop music, pop fashion and pop movies and seems to be given comparable publicity treatment.²

Why have people responded so warmly to pop art? Perhaps they had never before looked at the objects in their environment with regard to color and form. Maybe they find the erection of such mundane objects as beer cans to a position of art objects vaguely amusing. One may suppose that seeing the contents of the grocer's shelf on the walls of an art gallery gives a sense of involvement or of identification with everyday environments. However, all or none of these reasons could apply to the situation. Jasia Reichardt says of its development,

The extraordinary development which has made pop into a household name is not actually due, as one might imagine, to the lightening acceptance of anything that is new or strange but to an extraordinary process of democratization of certain types of art which seem to lend themselves to exploitation in other fields.³

The commercial aspect of pop art, therefore, lies not only in its subject matter, but also in the manner in which it is exploited. McLuhan says, "Popular art is the clown reminding us all of the life and faculty that we have omitted from our daily routines."⁴ Of pop art's connection with advertising, McLuhan says that the commercial artists had developed the ad into an ikon. This, in essence, is what the pop artists do when they paint a soup can or a Brillo box. It becomes an ikon, and this is inevitably linked with the mandala, that constantly recurring symbol. The pop artist's goal seems to be to distort the image and to modify it just enough so that, rather than exist as a naturalistic object, it becomes a recognizable symbol. Pop art tends to condense the complex modern scene, and the artists often extract significant elements from contemporary scenes and present them in more abbreviated forms. A much-stressed aspect of pop is the familiarity of its images; however, there is also involved a necessary alteration of the image's context, and a change of medium is indispensable. Also, the pop artist often multiplies the

³Ibid., pp. 86-87.
images with little noticeable variation. The artist's goal is to transform the image of contemporary society into a more provocative and ambivalent form. This form of representing a society to itself by means of repeating its mass images has never before been done with such effect. There are conflicting opinions as to whether it is a positive or negative statement about society. Some people, such as John Roblowsky, say, "Pop art is essentially a celebration of the wonder and beauty of contemporary American society." However, there are conflicting views. "It is an illegitimate child of the Dada anti-art movement, filled with the Dadaist wish to conquer abstract art." How did this movement of pop art get its start? Since the word was coined in England, many believe it has roots there. However, American and British pop have little relationship to one another, except for the images that England takes from American culture. It was in England that pop art first crystallized into a group and it was used as a vehicle for social protest and comment.

English Pop Art

Pop art in England started as a student movement in the late fifties. In some sense it was a student spree. The Royal College of Art was the place of its conception. It began as


a visual counterpart of a spate of novels and plays which ignored or derided middle-class culture and morality. The working classes had invaded the institutions of higher learning, bringing with them an uninhibited, articulate flow of ideas which would not be kept down. Pop art became intimately connected with the English class structure. Once started, the movement spread rapidly throughout the country. The pop artists from various colleges held a "Young Contemporaries" exhibition in London in 1961, which was the first major showing of pop art. It met with a resounding success.

One of these artists, from the Royal College, was Peter Blake. He has been described as the grand old man of English pop. He is most commonly known for the collage constructions that are automatically associated with pop art. However, today, he is changing from collage to painting, which he hopes will better reflect his own concept of the meaning of pop. "I started to become a pop artist from an interest in English folk art." He is especially interested in the fairground and barge painting of English folk art. The fair people have their ancestry in gypsy tribes and they are almost a race apart. Their artistic and oral tradition is a very vital and colorful part of the English folk culture. It is little wonder that such a source of folklore would attract an artist. Peter Blake

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wants to recapture and recreate some part of this old-time popular art. He has painted a small picture of Kid McCoy, a boxer on the fairground circuit of 1910. For this painting he read all the boxing magazines to get the feel of the sport. In order to make the painting as authentic as possible he painted it on wood and gave the surface an old look with artificial woodworm holes. He maintains that this feeling of age is essential to his purpose, for, to him, pop art is rooted in nostalgia. Yet he continually searches for a new pop art, one which expresses our own times. For Blake, pop art is like pop music, fundamentally an illusion. To him, both are concerned with states of illusion and both have such moods of illusion as their essence. He likes his work to be enjoyed by the same young people who like pop music. In his portrait of the Beatles he tried to create a visual significance that would match the mood of their music. When asked his opinion on why so many young artists find their inspiration in and identify with pop idols, he replied,

Partly, of course, as a normal reaction against the orthodox so-called cultural things—you know, Beethoven and D. H. Lawrence, the whole culture image concept of foreign films and such like. But also, of course, because Elvis, Bridget, The Beatles and The Lettermen and The Four Preps really do symbolize the vast popular culture from which pop largely derives its sources of inspiration.\(^8\)

Blake says that the pop artist has to get inside the popular culture with its plastic flowers and souvenir ashtrays. Maybe

\(^8\)Ibid., p. 185.
this is where the strength of pop art lies. It provides a bridge between the mass obsessions of society and the changing of such into rational patterns of a truly popular art form. This is the age of the masses, and they shape the destiny and popularize contemporary art to a greater degree than one might suppose.

David Hockney is another of the English artists associated with the beginnings of the movement. He uses an entirely different style and interpretation from that which Blake uses. Hockney uses a low form of illustration which, if one believes McLuhan, has a high involvement factor. He has a folksy look to his drawings totally unlike the super-slick, admass billboard style. He insists that, before he tackles any subject, he begins with a pure aesthetic. In his domestic interiors he portrays a strange magazine world of stall showers and arm-chairs filled with his well known "Physical culture youths." He seems to hint with the portraying of these sexless mass-think creatures that we are just a few steps away from 1984. His Rake's Progress has little to do with Hogarth, but is related in style to the traditional English lampoon-caricature. "Thus David Hockney seems to have returned to a type of satire which Lawrence Alloway considered the first truly popular art."9 Hockney seems to be aware of the camp quality of his work and one is never quite sure, when viewing his work, which of it

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expresses genuine feeling and which is a social satire. He
was one of the artists who exhibited at the "Young Contemporaries"
exhibition in London in 1961 with his painting of *Typhoo Tea*.

A complete contrast to both Blake and Hockney, Peter
Phillips is inspired by the mechanical. Phillips began studying
technical drafting, but changed to painting. Such magazines
as *Life*, *Post*, and *Look* became a source of material for him.
He borrows from the work of the air-brush artist and produces
precisely modelled figures. He feels the use of the air-brush
has been a major factor in achieving that technical perfection
he likes. There is in his work a slight undercurrent of violence;
however, he feels that the imagery is not important, but only
the way that it is handled and used.

How much these artists derive from Richard Hamilton, the
originator of the term pop art, is hard to say. In 1957
Hamilton wrote down exactly what the term pop art was to him
as an artist.

> . . . popular (designed for a mass audience);
> transient (short-term solution); expendable (easily
> forgotten); low-cost; mass-produced; young (aimed
> at youth) witty; sexy; gimmicky; glamorous; and last
> but not least Big Business.10

Hamilton's work was spread over a period of years and he was
probably in evidence more as a spiritual force than as a visual
originator of pop art.

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The London school of pop art is radically different from the New York school. There is the same interest in pop, but New York is considered to be the main-spring of popular culture. The British artists retain a strong literary streak, and they are too fond of wit and self-reflection to embrace the mass-think culture. They have absolutely no influence on the Americans and, strangely enough, are managing to resist the American influence. They have made an easy return to a form of realism which has always been close to the core of British painting.

American Pop Art

The basic difference between the British and American pop movements is that the visual pressures of advertising and mass-communications in New York are greater than those in London. Americans are a people who are oriented to advertising. America lives by grace of the ad-agencies. One has to understand the rampant commercialism of New York in order to understand pop art in New York. In the early fifties American art was dominated by the European traditions and ideas. Then came the breakthrough by Jackson Pollock and a group of similarly motivated artists, which, besides causing an aesthetic revolution, also gave the American artist, at last, a respected place in his society. A source of inspiration to the artists of America's pop movement has been William de Kooning, one of the greatest abstract expressionists of the post-war period.
He was always one to stray away from the herd and often his subject matter had affinities to popular culture motifs. Jasper Johns, one of the major influences on the New York pop artists, said that his two beer cans came indirectly from a suggestion by De Kooning.

De Kooning was annoyed with my dealer, Leo Castelli, for some reason, and said something like, "that son-of-a-bitch, you could give him two beer cans and he would sell them." I heard this and thought, what a sculpture--two beer cans. It seemed to fit perfectly with what I was doing, so I did them--and Leo sold them!!

Of course, no pop painting looks like a de Kooning. He formed an inspirational contact which was reformed and became a new attitude toward painting. De Kooning himself thought that he was on one mountain and the pop artists were on another. Once the movement had formed itself, then each artist interpreted the images in a different manner. Robert Rauschenberg is coming to terms with objects considered totally sub-aesthetic, whereas Johns is investigating the entire question of what "taste" is. Johns has insisted that the commonplace and mass-produced can be made unique and highly personal by the discerning artist.

Roy Lichtenstein, one of pop art's major exponents, was born in New York in 1923, and he grew up in the age of the comic book. At that time the comic book was a growing thing in the U. S. and beginning to take on the proportions of a cultural phenomenon. He gained his early experience in

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industrial design and display work. He employs in his art a method of "quoting" in the same tradition as the Renaissance copied the Romans and the Romans copied the Greeks. However, he uses the language of today to do this. Lichtenstein uses formal designs, taken from the most unlikely sources, transferring imagery which has an established two-dimensional quality to produce works of great strength and subtlety. In his most successful works, the subject matter is almost obscured by the scale of the blown-up mechanical dots. Much of his work has caused people to wonder in confusion about the closeness of his paintings to their original sources of imagery. His flat, comic-strip style denies spatial depth. The Ben-Day dots become a means of pattern-making and, when enlarged, become also very decorative. Lichtenstein himself likes the strong contradictions between the highly mechanized dots with their cold passivity and the strongly emotional content of his subjects. He insists that the meaning of his work lies in its interpretation as industrial. He thinks that the whole world is moving toward a completely industrialized society. McLuhan defines the comic strip as low definition and, thus, capable of a high involvement capacity. Maybe this has something to do with the highly participational quality of Lichtenstein's work. Lichtenstein describes his use of comic strips as a basis for his painting in this way. "... because of their anti-artistic image and because they are such a modern subject.
I like taking a discredited subject and putting it into a new unity.\textsuperscript{12}

He believes that painting, in this era of mass-think, should be impersonal. There is a sense of involvement in his work, with the most brazen characteristics of our culture, the things in our commercial world that we hate the most. These things, often pushed at us by the ad-men, have a very powerful impact upon us, in that they are all around us and fill our conscious moments. Pop artists are making art something that surveys and echoes the society it exists in.

James Rosenquist, born in North Dakota in 1933, was a professional billboard painter. It was while painting billboards that he first saw the characteristics of the enlarged faces and figures. He saw them in a half-recognizable state, and yet they had about them, at this distance, an abstract quality. This started him on the trail which has led him to the position of one of America's foremost pop artists. His palette is strictly that of the commercial billboard artist, consisting of pale pinks and bland greys, which fill in the razor-sharp contours of his fragmented images. It is this fragmentation that makes his work remarkable, in that there exists a strong contrast between the highly realistic manner of painting and the abstract effect he achieves with this fragmentation of images and subject matter. Rosenquist chooses

\textsuperscript{12} "Kidding Everybody," \textit{Time} (June 23, 1967), p. 54.
deliberately to disregard logical sequence. In this respect, his work would seem to closely parallel that "electrical environment" of McLuhan, which makes logical sequence illogical. His canvasses have a totality about them, a sense of instant awareness. The images he uses are just far enough removed from the present to be viewed dispassionately. He likes this sense of not yet belonging to history and not yet being removed from the reality of the present. Such images have a sense of freedom about them. However, although hailed as a pop artist, he insists that the popular images he uses in his pictures are not the subject matter of the paintings. He seems to have discovered a capacity for detachment that enables him to see, even in things of a fraudulent nature, an aesthetic value.

Perhaps the artist who has caused the most stir by his experiments with the nature and form of art is Andy Warhol. He is the master of the communication game that elicits the false response. He is the most straightforward of his contemporaries in the field and forces his position of the mechanical as far as he possibly can. There is little sense of give and take in his work and he has assistants who do the work for him, thus attempting to remove it as far as possible from a fine art experience. Warhol is the chief exponent of the movement to reduce the difference between the ready-made and the hand-made.
Silk-screening photographic news images, or stencilling commercial labels in a sort of orgasm of aesthetic 'delight', Warhol and his assistants turn out dozens of the same object, whether exact stencil replicas of Brillo crates which ironically were designed by abstract expressionist Jim Harvey (in solid and un-functional form) or signed, real Campbell soup tins.\textsuperscript{13} Warhol deliberately avoids any reference to painting. He has been quoted numerous times as expressing the opinion that everybody should be a machine. He wants to be a machine. He started as a commercial artist in Pittsburgh, where he worked on advertisements and window display. In 1961 Lord and Taylors used his blown-up comic-strip paintings of Dick Tracy as window display. Nothing in his work is overly stated except by repetition. His paintings of Marilyn and Elvis use this repetitive image forcefully, and we are caught between reading the images in the strip as a form of message or of appreciating the whole as a formal design of repetitive elements. There is a desire to seek the mood behind the face, and he touches that spring in people which causes them to be attracted to tragedy.

Warhol's films are an attempt to encompass the viewer and involve him in the work of art. In his early films he pushed the boredom factor to its extremes by filming such things as Sleep, which shows a man sleeping for six hours, or Empire, which scrutinizes one facade of the Empire State Building for eight hours. However, in his Chelsea Girls he moves into a different realm. Two films are shown side by side on a wide

\textsuperscript{13}Mario Amaya, Pop as Art (London, 1965), p. 103.
screen and occasionally they overlap. The *Chelsea Girls* contains its full compliment of sound, movement and storyline. The two films being shown together can be considered a mixing of media; however, rather than seeking to establish a new art form, as artists such as Rauschenberg do with their mixed media works, Warhol seems to be subverting cinema as an art form. "Warhol's films demand a new aesthetic; their admirers would say the artist has already gone some way towards creating one."\(^{14}\) How one would define such an aesthetic is hard to say. Warhol has reconciled, in his work, the worlds of big business and the immediate past. Most artists cannot make this reconciliation.

In a recent book entitled *Andy Warhol's Index (Book)*, he produces a complex series of images, both nostalgic and immediate, which are a statement on the fragmentation of our environment. There is no storyline to the book, no statements, in fact, nothing on which to base any real criticism. There is a pop-up of an embattled medieval castle, reminiscent of a children's storybook, which has the words, "We're attacked constantly" printed on the page. There are also pop-ups of a World War One biplane and a Hunt’s Tomato Paste can. All of these are set among black and white photographs from his films, such films as *Exploding Plastic Inevitable*, which moves right into the teeth of the discotheque world, and the *Velvet Underground* with Nico. Some photographs are clear, others are out

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of focus, and still others become black and white designs with a strong graphic quality. There is a photograph of fifty coke bottles, a balloon with "index" printed on it, and a box of two pyramidal constructions. The box is held flat by the closed pages, but springs out when the book is opened, by means of a rubber band which causes it to become three-dimensional. There is also a record in the book, which actually plays and consists of unidentified voices discussing the book. A man says that the book is supposed to be representative of the world of Andy Warhol. In the background, music is playing. The girl on the record thinks that the book is very sentimental and that the people who were involved in the making of it are not really sentimental. The record is as fragmentary as the book, yet there is something in both which involves one. This is a book with an added dimension. Rather than take the logical, sequential Gutenberg form of book, to use McLuhan's terminology, this book jumps back and forth to involve one visually and physically. One must catch the pop-out as it flies past one's ear, fold out the pages and play the record. The book in a sense becomes a "happening" of one. Here is involvement in book form. Perhaps the book is an example of that "new aesthetic" that Battcock talks about. It certainly is unlike any other book previously published and gives the feeling of television images or film images placed in spatial and challenging relationships to one another. An article in Look states,
A new generation of artists, influenced by Marshall-the-medium-is-the-message-McLuhan and the motion oriented kineticists, have rejected a classic permanence as an art form. . . . Is all the commotion a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing? Or is it the beginning of an entirely new culture?"15

Op Art

There is another movement in the modern art world which must be considered. Op art swept across the Western world, tricking the eye, playing upon the fallability of vision. Precision is the main consideration in optical art, and the intention is to engage the eye of the beholder. However, there is little sense of involvement. Op art does not relate itself to the world around, as does pop art. It makes no statements concerning the imagery of the popular culture, but it relates to mass production in that it could easily be mass-produced. The immediate forerunner of op art was Joseph Albers, the pioneer of color theory.

Much op art is removed from the artist's subjective discovery. It is the result of a mechanical muse, and the artist becomes a computer programmer churning out visual experience . . . is it therefore science and not art?16

Vassarely is one of the leading exponents of op art. He says that his whole life is consecrated to the modern city, yet he lives outside Paris in the peace and beauty of the


French countryside. His paintings have a vibrancy and verve, he creates tension through paradox. His shapes, lozenges, squares and ovals are knit together in complex arrangements to create illusions of depth and perspective. The colors glow, and he sets off such colors as electric blues, bright greens, and chartreuses with murky purples. Yet he believes in the multiplication of a work of art and maintains that one unique piece of art, in this age, is an anachronism and that art should be multiplied as cars and appliances are. He, like Warhol, has an assembly line of assistants who execute the paintings which he drafts. He also has silk-screened many of his works, but these lack the vivacity of his originals.

Another exponent of op art is Bridget Riley, who works mainly in black and white. Her patterns are visually bewildering and very free for interpretation in other fields.

Op art intensifies the color theories of pointillism. Its interest lies in the creation of a new, more palpable disparity between the illusion of a chromatic color and the usually static stimuli which cause it.

Happenings

A major part of the art scene today is the part played by happenings. There is a widespread opinion expressed about these events, but still little is actually known, except by the few who have participated in them. One kind of happening is that staged by theater people. The other kind, which grew
out of the advanced American painting of the last decade, is mainly contributed to by active painters. The contrast of happenings to the arts of the past is strong in that they have no structured beginning, middle or end. Their form is open-ended and fluid. They exist for a single performance. They all demand involvement and participation and somehow seem to suit the environment of this electric age. There may be developing an importance of human values, rather than aesthetic, in relation to the art of today. The avant-garde of today is in this zone of intermedia.

Posters

Another emerging trend is the art of the poster. Normally not meant to last, the poster is destined to sell something. A passion for posters has taken hold, and some of the nation's major artists are producing them. Perhaps one of their virtues is that they cater to every taste and can speak for many groups. The spirit of Art Nouveau is discernable in many of these posters. The art of the poster was developed by Toulouse-Lautrec and he achieved striking effects with the greatest economy of means. In the period of post-impressionism the word "decorative" became a favorite expression, and the artist who displayed a sense of balance and skill in decorative simplification became the hero of the Art Nouveau movement. Aubrey Beardsley was one of the most characteristic representatives of the fashion. He became famous for bold black and white
illustrations but also fell into a trap with his too simple style. The illustrations wear well as decorative ornaments, but force and dynamic have been sacrificed to the creation of flat patterns. The eighteen-nineties in England was a flamboyant period and the Beardsley show in London last year struck a responsive note on mod England, and Beardsley motifs appeared everywhere. Beardsley was to art what Oscar Wilde was to literature, and the tone of their times seems to parallel the tone of mod England of the nineteen-sixties. The Poster Center in New York now sells art posters for prices ranging from twenty-five dollars. Art posters have become collectors' items.

Aesthetics

Many critics say of pop art that the effectual terms of mass consumption can be equated to its artistic validity. However, this argument is all right when applied to mass media tailored to saleability, but is erroneous when applied to any serious artist striving toward concrete ideals. "The question is, can fine art really be evaluated on such an elementary level of direct impact, of 'instant delight' for the masses, or indeed has this ever been so?" Britain has been slower to grasp the full extent of pop because it has long been steeped in European "progressive" aesthetic. On the other hand, America traditionally lacks the respect which youth has for

the past and has really nourished the pop cult. There is now in England, however, a pop-mod approach of selling the latest fine art as fashion. Pop painting does not exhibit a progressive aesthetic. The dilemma is one of a society unable to create its own taste, shackled to an art form which fails to give it sustenance.

There are many differing opinions as to the aesthetic qualities of pop art. At the beginning of this thesis the dictionary definition of aesthetic was set forth as being the accepted definition. Herbert Read, a leading British art critic and author, gives a definition of aesthetics that has a little more bite to it.

. . . increasing ability to discriminate between one form and another, this power of discrimination is aesthetic, that is to say, a power based on the education and training of the senses of sight, touch and hearing. To discriminate between the comparative significance of a form or the significance of that form in the field of total sensation—such is the aesthetic faculty.  

Read lays stress upon the discrimination of man and emphasizes the education of the senses. Placing his theory in the light of history, he says that this discriminatory aesthetic faculty is that which has set man above the animals. From this he declares that any movement leading to the decline of human civilization by undermining the discrimination of man is a retrograde movement. Pop and op art are, in his opinion, such

movements. Read insists that in a genuine work of art there are two elements, one of an organic nature which opens up the category of vitality, and the other of mathematics, which gives rise to beauty. He says that art's integrity lies in the concentration on formal unity and vitality and that art serves the evolving consciousness of mankind in the sense that it establishes a human world in the midst of an indifferent universe. Certain forces threaten art's integrity and among the modes he reviews are incoherence, insensitivity and privacy. The quest for originality by a seeking of new solutions from available images is, according to Read, a vain one and one of the main excuses used to justify pop art. He insists that there is nothing new in pop art and that accumulation of debris has been used before by Dadaists. At least he allows that the Dadaists have remained artists, but he thinks that the popists have lost their conscious style and, therefore, can no longer be counted as artists.

Maybe it would be in order to take a brief look at the Dada movement. It is no coincidence that the Dada movement was born in the nightmare year of 1916. Its roots extend back beyond 1914, but how far back depends on one's viewpoint. Some have seen affinities with the anarchist disorders in the Europe of the sixteen-eighties, and still others have sought its roots in the French literary tradition of aesthetic revolt. Both suggestions are incomplete, for Dada also borrowed
elements from many other vanguard art movements of the time. Dada itself, although several of its early exponents were artists, was never an art movement. It was a revolutionary state of mind and an assault on all accepted values. However, although no school of Dada art existed, it did serve to crystallize an idea which has become very prominent in our time, namely that art should no longer be an interpretation of reality but should become a part of reality. Invention was the essence of Dada and the cry came to be, "To hell with beauty." The forces of artistic freedom that Dada unleashed have inspired surrealists, abstract expressionists and pop artists. Although pop art is often called neo-dada, the resemblance is only superficial. Pop art is not at war. It has been publicized by the mass communications that are used today and as a result has reached a far greater audience than ever before.

The idea of the privacy of pop seems to offend Herbert Read more than anything else. The fact that an artist can say that he felt the need to paint a certain kind of object and that others would see it and recognize the need and be satisfied by it is, to Read, a very illogical situation. We are told that he has been heard to say that the artist has no need to communicate. The artist merely has to satisfy his private desires in order to create his art and there is no need for justification. Thus the whole purpose of art is called into question. He says,
Disintegration by definition, has no unifying principle, but a label must be found to cover the diverse phenomena of the contemporary scene and so the term pop art has come into vogue. It was coined on the analogy of pop music, but pop music is genuinely popular, a modern version of folk music. It may be sophisticated and it may contradict all the canons of academic music, but it springs from the people and serves their needs for stimulation and emotional release. Pop art can make no such claim; it has no roots in mass-culture and its claim to select and emphasize popular images is a delusion. He admits that some pop artists, such as Larry Rivers and Rauschenberg, use a recognizable "handwriting" and assemble their compositions with a certain sensitivity of feeling for color and composition. However, he doubts whether these remnants of an aesthetic conscience are enough to save the works from incoherence.

Many arguments both for pop art and against can be made by aesthetitians; however, there are a group of young people who insist that aesthetic criteria are beside the point since pop art is anti-art. This group tends to be made up of the young who drop out and exist on the fringes of the art world, not really creating but encouraging those who do create. There is still another group who say that pop artists do deal in aesthetics, but that this is an enlarged aesthetic which has come to encompass many things. Read's belief that pop art has no ideal because it believes in involvement with whatever presents itself in the visual chaos of modern living seems

19Ibid., p. 152.
irrelevant to some since there is meant to be nothing more than this involvement.

Abraham Kaplan believes that a study of dis-values would aid in the evaluation of popular art as opposed to academic art. Basically pop art is a revolt against the oppression of the academically familiar.

My thesis is this: that popular art is not a degradation of taste but its immaturity, not the product of external social forces but produced by a dynamic intrinsic to the aesthetic experience itself.²⁰

He insists that aesthetic judgement is one thing and personal taste is another and that all things aesthetic can only be analyzed contextually. Pop art seems to be a turning point, and the thing that sets it apart is its emotional tone of disgust with a society that is permeated with the standards and ideological outlook of its middle classes. Pop art is certainly not a continuation of the old aesthetic order. The fact that many of the art elements, such as color, form and balance, can be applied to pop art indicates that pop art could be a new dimension of the old aesthetic order. Whether a tomato soup can is aesthetically pleasing depends on how one looks at it. If one defines commercially produced objects as definitely lacking in aesthetic standards, then one can hardly consider pop art as containing any aesthetic qualities. However, one

must consider things in relationship to their times. Today one is confronted with a jungle of visual material which one cannot dismiss as totally lacking in quality. Many advertisements are more aesthetically pleasing than some paintings and, as such, must be considered an integral part of our popular culture. Therefore, the use of commercial symbols and ideas in a fine art form is a natural progression of the merging of art and advertisement. It would seem that this is not anti-art, since there are deliberate choices made and since most pop artists succeed in producing work of high standard artistically. Warhol's departure from the usual form of film and book fits into our electric environment. It would seem that our environment calls for a new kind of involvement. Visual sequence is no longer enough, and an art is needed that fulfills the inward implosion that is taking place. An art is needed to keep pace with the nervous system as it is expanded by electricity. So, it seems as though this pop art is a new dimension of aesthetic which is needed in this time of the speed-up of communications. The art echoes the frenzy of living, the changeability of images and the dependence of a people on their popular culture.
CHAPTER V

MUSIC AS THE ROOTS OF POPULAR CULTURE

Roots of Pop

That pop music and pop art are related, in Britain at least, has already been stated by Peter Blake in the previous section. The linkage of art and music is observed in underground films and they become a form of intermedia. Popular music has, of course, been in existence much longer than the movement of pop art; however, there has always been a popular art in the form of folk art. Likewise, much of our popular music is derived from the folk music of America, which in its turn is derived from the home countries of the immigrants. Country fiddlers derived from the Scottish and Irish bagpipes, and the rhythms which were played approximated the dances of the old country. Negro spirituals and the birth of the blues continued the development and eventually led to the beginning of rock and roll. Rock and roll music has a very basic structure of harmonies, and its range has always been restricted. The beat behind the rock is the most noticeable feature. The appeal is very basic and the echo of primitive rhythms produces a stimulus that captures the young. Combined with these came the emotional tone of country and folk music, as well as their
rhythms. In a sense, rhythm and blues, folk, and rock are considered lesser in value than the set standard of classical music. They have always been morally suspect. Now, however, they are rooted deeply in the mainstream of American society, and the culture is being reshaped to accommodate them. The new music is forceful, full of echoes of the past and hopes for the future.

Liverpool Beginnings

To understand the Liverpool sound, one really needs to appreciate Liverpool itself. It is a cosmopolitan city in that, since it is a port, many sailors from other countries make a temporary home there. The indomitable River Mersey rules all, with her dockyards, ferries and brown sliding water. She is the beginning of a ship canal which takes freight vessels thirty miles inland to Manchester, the heart of England's industrial county of Lancashire. There is a Slavic community in Liverpool, a Chinese sector, and many Irish workers. As one of the chief ports to Ireland, the traffic of Irish immigrants is steady. This strange mingling of peoples has produced a vigorous climate of opinion and a language known as "scouse." Supposedly English, it is almost incomprehensible to an outsider. Liverpool was heavily bombed during the war and still shows the scars. Rebuilding has been slow because of the high proportion of migrant workers and the renting out of substandard housing by absentee landlords. Of course, the heavy
industry of the country scatters itself around Liverpool's shores. Coal is hauled up by sea from Cardiff in Wales to help run the industries. Oil refineries grace the shores and the air hangs heavy with smoke and pollution. The skies are usually a leaden grey, hemming in the people among their black and grey buildings. More often than not, Liverpool is wrapped in a driving, misty rain, since England's prevailing wind is a west wind, and the moisture falls continually on the whole of Lancashire. Down the ship canal from Manchester pours a steady stream of exports, passing the incoming stream of raw materials. All is activity, hard work and little beauty to rest the eyes upon. Under all this activity has always existed the folk beat of the people. An investigation of the social conditions that form a background to the Mersey sound's emergence is necessary.

Liverpool has a university, a thriving art college and many technical colleges, yet until recently there was little contact between the lower classes of Liverpool and the upper classes. The lower classes of Liverpool live in endless rows of two-up-two-down houses. This is the world of "Hobson's Choice," with the tin bath hanging in the yard, and a usual family arrangement of one bath per week per member of the family. These houses were built in long rows by the manufacturers of the industrial revolution who sought to house their workers as cheaply as possible. The houses usually
stand back to back with one another with a narrow cobbled alley between the yards. More often than not the streets end in a factory entrance or yard. To wander around them gives one a sense of history and creates pictures of scurrying people, huddled in their knitted shawls against the cold dawn, their iron-shoed clogs clattering on the cobbles as they hurry to the mill.

Now these areas are slums, for many of the mills are only empty shells and people look elsewhere for work. From these streets came the teen-age gangs of Liverpool. This was the violent generation mentioned earlier. The gang members indulged in petty larceny, gradually leading themselves into lives of crime. The gangs became the image of teen-age Britain. Waving bicycle chains and flick knives, they would board trains, slashing seats and breaking windows. They would form chains across streets, blocking traffic and forcing fights with enraged motorists. These gangs were, between 1954 and 1958, the only society the adolescent in Liverpool knew. With the coming of Bill Haley, however, the gangs began to react to the stimulus. They would fill the cinemas with an entire adolescent audience, then, when the music started, they would become infected by its beat and dance in the aisles. When prevented from doing this, damage would occur, seats would be torn and twisted in an orgy of vandalism. The beat spread like a rumor until it became foremost in the minds of the gangs. All over Merseyside
gangs were giving birth to groups. In June, 1958, one gang, called the Park Gang, gave birth to the Tremoloes.

Soon the group began to practice regularly and some of the gang members pooled their knowledge and made two large amplifiers. The combination of terrific noise and regular practicing soon made it impossible to practice in a front room. The gang scoured the turf for deserted houses, bomb shelters and finally church halls.\(^1\)

It now began to be a question of, not how well a gang could fight, but how well their group played. The meeting place ceased to be the gang hut and became a local dance hall. The boys needed girls to dance with and pairing developed. This was aided by the growth of beat clubs, of which the Cavern was the first.

This palatial hole with perspiring walls became the prototype. Boy meets, or takes girl in a dampy, hot sticky atmosphere with very little light anywhere apart from the stage. The beat is important but the atmospherics are all-important.\(^2\)

In these clubs, gangs had to mix, and so the gangs became limited to the criminal element or the very young adolescent. Bass amplification was started, and so came that accentuated beat, a standard practice of Mersey groups. This thumping sound made the clubs complete as the new adolescent world, a new whole source of status within themselves. The resulting music was refreshing and vital and became the true and unique voice of Liverpool's working class. The music epitomized


\(^{2}\)Ibid., p. 14.
Northern man with his naturalness and directness. There exists, in England, a distinction between the Northern and Southern people. The Northerners of the Northwest are descendants of the Celts and Anglo-Saxons, who were pushed back by the Normans and French in the South and the Scandinavians in the East. They inherit the Anglo-Saxon coarse sense of fun and open manner. Deep in them also lies the dark, poetic Celtic strain. This shows through in the Liverpool sound, with its bouncy beat, its open happiness, and a developing sense of oral poetry set to music. A quotation from Peter Laurie will serve to strengthen this change from violence to music in Liverpool.

Just as violence makes a basically primitive organic appeal, so does music, but with the difference that while the social potentialities of violence are limited, music offers a vastly wider and more fruitful field of group action. At bottom its appeal, unlike that of any other art form, is built into the electronics of the brain; the beating drum synchronizes with the rhythms of the thalamus.3

Added to the fact of many races fertilizing Liverpool, the inborn strains of the Northern man and the social necessity for a popular art form is the strong oral tradition of folk song in the North. People sing in the mills, pubs and clubs.

Today, pop music is the bloodstream of the teen-age cult. It has become the pulse of teen-age life and, perhaps, without it there would not have been the revolution in the arts that there has been in England. Music has become the communication network of youth.

The Beatles

The largest impact of any pop stars in recent years has undoubtedly been made by the Beatles. The Cavern, mentioned previously as the first beat club in Liverpool, was the place where they really hit the big time. Their manager, Brian Epstein, tells how his first acquaintance with them was through a boy asking for a record called "My Bonnie," recorded in Germany by the Beatles. The Reeperbahn, in Hamburg, is a trying-out ground for British groups, who play nightly in the clubs along this seedy, seamy side of the city. Epstein went to hear them at the Cavern, which is in reality a disused underground warehouse, and their new music with its pounding bass beat and vast engulfing sound captivated him. Shortly after their discovery, Beatlemania swept England.

Ever since their beginnings in the Cavern, I have known that the Beatles would become major stars, but no-one was prepared for the extraordinary events of late autumn last year when Britain's youth became enslaved by the music and by the personality of the Beatles.4

The Beatles became the chief talking point of 1963. By Christmas it was almost impossible to pick up a newspaper without seeing a reference to the Beatles. They were still on the fringe of the delinquent generation; however, their fans were mainly of the third, detached generation. Sales rocketed and riches came. The Beatles conquered America, and screaming teen-age

girls became a part of the scenery. It is not proposed to enter into a discussion as to why the Beatles attracted such mass mania. More important to this thesis is the consideration of the aesthetics of their music and the social revolution resulting from it. Socialologically, it is not difficult to see the appeal of the Beatles. The social strata were already fading, and with the Beatles there has been a tremendous release for the newly confident young who watched their rise to the top. The image of the hairy-headed, hard-living, outspoken North has begun to capture the imagination of Londoners in much the same way that the decadent, soft-spoken South captivated New Yorkers years ago. The Beatles' original sense of rhythm and ability to bounce the shock waves back off an excited audience, combined with the Northern mystique, changed England from a staid old lady into a mini-skirted teen-ager.

Pop music is often equated with its media. This gives a wrong sense of it, for on this basis of mass entertainment comes the false assumption that it is of low quality. There are arguments against and for the quality of popular culture.

We live in an "intellectual" musical world today. Simple tuneful melody has been abandoned in the classical sphere altogether (where are the latter day descendants of Handel, Mozart, Schubert?). Jazz musicians regard all tunes as mere "corn" fodder for their own complex improvisations. All the more reason to be glad, then, that tunes are still being written—vivid and vibrant ones in the pop field, by Beatles Lennon and McCartney; and others too.

The adult's attitude to pop music is colored by the fact that aesthetic experiences were, until recently, almost entirely the prerogative of the upper classes, as discussed in section one of this thesis. Probably, in the past, much of the popular, commercial culture has been artistically inferior. What has lasted owes its survival to its creator. The young have been able to reconcile the importance of a mass audience with their own creative, intuitive best. It seems to be a rule that everyone creates best that which he actively wants. The teenage section of society has spread its culture by creating to its own demands, so that now its aims and wishes have come together. There is absolutely no reason why mass standards should not become as high as exclusive standards. As Peter Laurie says,

The rewards of creative artistic activity are in general related to the size of audiences reached; the greater the incentives of audiences measured in millions and paying in millions, will, other things being equal, inevitably attract talents not only from the established arts, but also from other fields altogether, until eventually the mass culture will absorb the exclusive, and we will find ourselves, as we were three hundred years ago, once again a single culture society.  

However, although some people think that the pop music field is open to praise in terms of contemporary musical criticism, not all are inclined to say of the Beatles, with William Deedes, Minister of Information, 1964, "They herald a cultural

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6Laurie, p. 97.
revolution among the young which may become part of the history of our time. . . . For those with eyes to see it, something important and heartening is happening here."

Pop music is an almost basic-sense experience and this is where its virtue lies. The Beatles push this sense experience out to whole audiences. One man who comes right out firmly against the Beatles and against popular culture is Paul Johnson. He complains that the intellectuals have begun turning their backs on their trade and have begun worshipping at the shrine of pop culture. Johnson puts all pop together in one parcel and seems ignorant of the fact that there are four or five separate, and often contradictory, movements under the general name of pop. He says,

And what of the culture which is served up to the youth. According to Mr. Deedes, "the aim of the Beatles and their rivals is first class of its kind" . . . Merit has nothing to do with it. The teen-ager comes not to hear but to participate in a ritual, a collective grovelling [sic] to gods who are themselves blind and empty.

What a contrast is the remark by The Times' music critic.

One gets the impression that they think simultaneously of harmony and melody, so firmly are the major tonic sevenths and ninths built into their tunes, and the flat submediant key switching so naturally in the Aeolian cadence at the end of "Not a Second Time."

The toning of pop songs today is toward rhythmical subtlety

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7Ibid., quoting William Deedes, Minister of Information, Spring, 1964.


but with a pronounced beat. The Beatles exemplify this in their lyrics and sources for "quotations."

Development

After the furor had settled on Beatlemania, a surprising thing happened. Adults began to listen to and appreciate the Beatles. The youth, sensing this adult seal of approval, began to look for new heroes in the Rolling Stones, who all have the look of people in a painting by Memling, pale with long hair. This left the Beatles free to turn their minds to new and strange rhythms, more complex lyrics and a listening audience, rather than a dancing audience. They have developed into the single most creative force in pop music. The gap has been bridged between rock and classical by mixing elements of Bach with their compositions. They have turned to the Orient and the sitar to achieve some of the most compellingly original sounds ever heard in pop music. The first break came with "Yesterday," a ballad sung to the accompaniment of a string quartet. George Harrison studied six weeks with Ravi Shankar, and soon ragarock was all the rage. Then Lennon and McCartney developed a passion for Karlheinz Stockhausen, electronic composer, and their Strawberry Fields Forever is full of space-age sounds. The use of such methods as playing tapes backwards is as new to pop as it is standard to electronic music. The mind, and only the mind, can encompass the universe, and the Beatles provide a sort of push in the direction of such
liberation of oneself. The cover of a recent album, *Revolver*, was designed by Klaus Voorman, and it echoes the dream experience of the Beatles' music. Their photographs are collaged amidst fine pen portraits of themselves and their swirling hair. Then came perhaps the most significant of their songs, one that Kenneth Tynan, critic and literary manager of the National Theater, has called the best musical evocation of LSD that he has ever heard. "Turn off your mind and float downstream, It is not dying . . . "

From this comes acid rock. The song gives a feeling of waiting on the edge of consciousness for a vision of beauty. McCartney says about it,

> When we wrote it, John had just read Leary's book on psychedelic experience, a manual based on the Tibetan book of the Dead. To us it was just great.

The better their songs succeed, the greater the liberation they feel to try more daring innovations. Lennon's words have gone far beyond the usual limited vocabulary of pop songs, and perhaps with the album "Sgt. Pepper," they have reached a peak of one kind of experimentation. This is a long-playing album, which has had a huge success. Many music critics have called it a modern symphony. A student talking to a reporter for the *New Yorker* said, "It goes beyond making you

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feel good, it has aesthetic appeal. It conforms to my conception of art."^12 The Beatles have drawn on many musical sources, English music-hall, Baroque, liturgical, but now in this record they are truly themselves. They are now working in that territory where entertainment steps over into art. They are the art beat of today.

To the fractured sixties, the Beatles are what the painter Toulouse-Lautrec was to Paris in the nineties, and what free-wheeling novelist Scott Fitzgerald was to America in the twenties. They are the interpreters and innovators—Lennon, McCartney and Harrison especially. They reflect and influence many of the movements in all the arts today.^13

Aaron Copeland says, "When people wish to recreate the moods of the sixties, they will play the Beatles."^14 They are always working up a new sound, and the synthetic sound they produce is a new art form in itself, according to their producer-manager, George Martin.

The old Liverpool rock style is dead indeed, and the Beatles are moving into the world of visual imagery with their films. "Magical Mystery Tour" is a bus tour of England's West Country. There is also a record of the film's music and, contained in the album, is an illustrated booklet of the tour, with some photographs and some cartoon-like illustrations of the film. There is a turn toward dreaming, and the mysticism

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^14 Ibid., p. 33.
of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi would seem to have something to do with it, for through his International Meditation Society he has affected a change in the Beatles' lives. At a conference at Bangor in North Wales in the summer of 1967, the Beatles learned about meditation, along with many other people in various art fields. George Harrison says of his beliefs,

Yoga and discipline, that's the way to get high. There was a yogi who was born before Christ. He is still living today up in the Himalayas. He casts no shadow and he leaves no footprint. He and Christ are watching over the world. All this will soon be made known through the happy pop scene.  

Maharishi will be discussed at length later, but it suffices to say that this meditation has become central to the lives of the Beatles.

Literature

While music is the main occupation to the Beatles, they have moved into the visual world in their film making and into the literary world via John Lennon. Peter Schickele, writing in Nation, says many complimentary things about Lennon's book, In His Own Write. The book has a style all its own, although those who know Stanley Unwin, a well-known British character, will perhaps detect a little of his influence. It is a collection of pure fancy and nonsense verse and stories. The drawings are by John, who attended the Liverpool School of Art. Perhaps a quotation from one of his books will serve better

\[15\text{Ibid.}, p. 33.\]
than description in the representation of his style.

Azue ord gnome, harrassed Wilsod, won the General Erection with a very small marjorie over the Torchies. Thus pudding the Labouring Party back into powell after a large abcess. This he could not have done without the barking of Thee Trade Unions, heady by Frenk Cunnings (who noun has a SAFE SEAT in Nuneating thank you and Frank) only 621 Bowels hasn't.

Sir Alice doubtless—Whom was quoted as—'bitherly dithapointed' but managed to keep smirking on his 5,000,000 acre estate in Scotland with a bit of fishing and all that.¹⁶

This literary effort of Lennon leads into a consideration of poetry and prose in relation to the musical beat scene. The mutated words evoke a sense of confusion which is not uncommon in this fast-moving world, yet at the same time they permit a sense of humor about those things which most closely concern all people. They spin webs of fantasy around the most ordinary actions. It all seems to be an adult version of Edward Lear.

The Liverpool Poets

Edward Lucie-Smith has suggested that a parallel of Murger's Vie de Bohème exists in Liverpool today. The art, poetry and music worlds are no longer separate, but intertwined. Among the group of artists working in Liverpool at this time are some young poets who call to mind the beats of America in the fifties. One can see echoes of Ginsberg and Kerouac in the work of the Liverpool poets, and, indeed, Allen Ginsberg stayed in Liverpool with them for a while attending their poetry

readings and living their kind of life. About the poets of the beat generation Gregory Corso says,

*The poets of the beat generation like Jack Kerouac have entered the leprous kingdom of prose and have kissed the leper. The beat generation is a generation of love. To be beat is to be hip. Hip means love, love means indifference, means not wanting to be bugged or to bug.***

This is part of the philosophy of the Liverpool poets; however, they also owe much to the Beatles. Stuart Sutcliffe, who was a Beatle in the Hamburg days and died in Hamburg before they became successful, was a talented painter from the Liverpool School of Art, and this formed an avant-garde link for the Beatles. So this young group of poets took up the Beatles' feeling for Liverpool and transferred it into a prose and poetry style that perfectly suits the youth and avant-garde of England.

The Liverpool poets are influenced by the Beats, but differently because they are not really at odds with their environment. They are essentially celebrators. What's happening in Liverpool seems to me to stem from a marriage of pop culture (mostly musical) and avant-garde culture (mostly visual).***

One poet in particular, Adrian Henri, who trained at the Liverpool School of Art as a painter, seems to sense no barrier between the two media, but uses both art and poetry together.

*Like the U. S. pop painters we try to operate in the gap between art and life, i.e. using traditions and aesthetics of the fine art but the techniques and*

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imagery of the mass media. This is why I work a lot with music—I work with a guitarist as much as possible and also we are part of a co-operative beat group called "The Liverpool Scene." I came to poetry via painting and my ideas were largely formed vis-a-vis the visual arts whereas McGough arrived at a similar point through poetry, particularly early Auden (Letters from Iceland) etc.19

These young artists form a vital link in the chain of aesthetic emancipation for the young. One poem by Roger McGough will serve to illustrate the general style and feelings of the group.

Let me die a young man's death
not a clean and inbetween
the-sheets, holy-water death,
not a famous-last words,
peaceful, out-of-breath death.

When I'm 73
and in constant good tumour [sic]
may I be mown down at dawn
by a bright red sports car
on my way home from
an all night party.

or when I'm 91
with silver hair
and sitting in a barbers chair
may rival gangsters
with ham-fisted tommyguns burst in
and give me a short back and sides.

or when I'm 104
and banned from the Cavern
May my mistress
catching me in bed with her daughter
and fearing her son
cut me up into little pieces
and throw away every piece but one.

Let me die a young man's death
not a free-from-sin, tiptoe-in
candle-wax and waning death

not a curtains-drawn, by angels-borne
'What a nice way to go' death. 20

These poets are exuberant in their praise of Liverpool. They are biting on Vietnam, carefree with death and ultimately concerned with personal contact rather than mass reactions. Their poetry is meant to be read aloud to a background of beat music and in this joining of music and reading they are revitalizing poetry and reviving the oral traditions of folk song and tale.

American Scene

As mentioned earlier, the beat came from America and was transmitted in England into an environmental sound that seemed to accentuate the declining glories of empire. Beat poetry had its beginnings here and began to be attached to musical backings. Bob Dylan has been called one of the greatest American poets of today; he is avant-garde. In the beginning he was a folk singer in the tradition of Joan Baez and Pete Seeger, then at the July 25th, 1965, Newport Folk Festival, the axe fell. Dylan turned from the usual guitar accompaniment to the then-new tone of folk-rock. The crowd half hoped that he would keep in the Pete Seeger setting of "work for a better world," but instead he threw at them the first of his out-of-depth songs. These songs were to rise high in the charts, backed by the rock n' roll guitar. The rest of the story is history, and now Dylan is established as a leader in the

folk-rock field. Many of his songs are "sung" in a high-pitched nasal semi-talking voice and accompanied by a harmonica. The subjects range from love, to pot, to freedom and are strangely savage, yet desolate in tone. The music is simple in rhythm, repetitive in sound and adds to the emphasis on loneliness inherent in all the poems. The poems sum up the theme of this electric world. The desolation of a person in a mass environment, the realization of futility woven into many patterns of civilization are clearly heard in Dylan's plaintive lyrics. One of his songs, "Chimes of Freedom," is especially beautiful. It is about a thunderstorm and the awe-inspiring sounds and sights, reminiscent of man shackled to his decaying ideals and hopes.

Through the mad mystic hammering of the wild and ripping hail
The sky cracked its forms in naked wonder
And the clanging of the church bells blew far into the breeze
Leaving only bells of lightening and its thunder.
Striking for the gentle, striking for the kind,
Striking for the guardians and protectors of the mind,
And the poet and the painter far behind his rightful time,
And we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing.
In the wild cathedral evening, the rain unravelled tails
For the dis-robed faceless forms of no position,
Tolling for the tongues with no place to bring their thoughts all in taken-for-granted situations.
Tolling for the deaf and blind, tolling for the mute,
And the mistreated, mateless mother, the mistitled prostitute,
And the misdemeanor of love chained and cheated by pursuit
And we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing.\footnote{Another Side of Dylan, Columbia Records.}
This is true poetry, expressive in feeling and a symbol of our times. This is oral poetry, again set to music and throbbing its way into one's conscious mind, there to remain. There are intertwined in the Dylan mystique all the ecstasy and tragedy of our world, some of its beautiful sides, some of its darker meanings. Now Dylan is swinging further into the poetry, leaving the beat behind and pushing the bounds of poetic experience out to all who are alive enough to hear. He is truly a poet of this twentieth century. The biggest hurt to the modern poet seems to be the lack of communication between people. So the music flows, suggesting feelings, communicating without words, involving people on the same level for a while.

The West Coast

Perhaps the biggest explosion in America has taken place on the West Coast. The hippies will be discussed in a later chapter. Here the most important thing is the development of the visually stimulating, environmental music. Rock n' roll became "shock-rock." Acid rock, meant to simulate an LSD trip, came into being and with this came a psychedelic revolution. Groups with rather strange names began to form--The Peanut Butter Conspiracy, The Electric Prunes and the Strawberry Alarm Clock. The Jefferson Airplane is perhaps the best-known, and at San Francisco's auditorium one experiences their free-wheeling music to a backdrop of projected patterns and flashing strobe-lights. They insist that the playing of
rock n' roll, called "love-rock," is The Sermon on the Mount, replacing the church in this century. Their music cuts across many stylistic lines, and they find themselves invited to the Bell Telephone Hour, to the San Francisco Symphony and the Monterrey Jazz Festival. The whole game is an attempt to bring off an electric wedding, insist the Doors, another West Coast group. Again there exists a tremendous involvement with electricity and environment. The music of the age is ear-piercing. It shatters the eardrums and jars the consciousness via many means. Out of all this has inevitably come an explosive kind of music known as "nerve-rock." The Fugs are its chief exponents, and they are out to shock people. They have been conducting a total assault on culture, and it has been successful to an astonishing degree. Their music is little different from the music of other groups, but the lyrics are what completely separates them. They are Manhattan-based and live in the East Village. They sing,

Kill, kill, kill for peace,
If we don't kill them then the Chinese will.
You don't want America to play second fiddle . . .

So the scene in America has become a crazy-patterned quilt of changing hues, a hotbed of feelings. Alternately, hope replaces despair; however, communication through sensation is still the name of the game.

Aesthetics

The free flow across the Atlantic of ideas and sounds charts a new international look, in which ideas freely rotate from place of origin through a cycle of change and back to place of origin. Rock n' roll has changed vastly from its early beginnings. Few would have laid claim to aesthetic virtues in Bill Haley's Comets. Then it was the rawness of the sound, the call to freedom for youth and the rallying point for a departure into the future. With the changing influences mentioned earlier in connection with the Beatles, a question of aesthetics arises. The music is no longer meant merely to inspire one to dance, there are many lesser groups capable of producing dancing music. The creative top percent busies itself with the art of creation. Deliberate choices are made. Sounds are overlapped, set to visual accompaniments, and the lyrics are lucid and candid. The preoccupation now is moving away from sound to sensation. That is the key word, sensation. Is not sensation an integral part of aesthetic experience? The aesthetic value of a piece of music cannot be analyzed, cut up and studied from an elemental point of view without due consideration for the sensation it creates. One is meant to be moved, concerned, alternately enraptured and enraged by such works as Beethoven's "Eroica." The music has diversity, mood, and a property for raising man above himself. Surely this is a part of its aesthetic worth. How different is it,
in terms of value, from our modern sound? The modern musicians also wish to enrapture, enrage, and raise man above himself. The two cannot be compared musically, except where the artists quote from classical sources, in terms of structure and the elements, but they can be compared in terms of effects. Surely it is here with the listener that aesthetic taste enters in, for one cannot hold up a piece of sheet music and extol its aesthetic qualities. One must listen with an open mind and allow oneself to be cradled in sensation to realize the aesthetic value. The pop-aesthetic and the avant-garde aesthetic are merging to form a new direction of aesthetic and wrapping all the arts in the cloak of experience and sensation.
CHAPTER VI

DRESS AS THE INDICATOR OF CHANGE

Social and Youthful Changes

The style of dress in England after the war was a kind of exaggeration of the voluptuousness of woman. In partial revolt against this, the college youth in the fifties adopted a "uniform" of blue jeans and duffle coats. The war had, as mentioned before, collapsed the social pyramid and dress became even more important as a means of social identification with a group. The dress adopted by the Teddy boys consisted of very tight trousers called "drainpipes," long jackets often down to the knees, velvet collars, and long hair swept back into a DA.¹ In the Teddy-boy era, so called because of the Edwardian-style dress, the girls failed to develop a distinctive look. They tended to stay with the post-war look of emphasized bosoms and hips, preposterously high heels, and blonde hair whenever possible. Gradually, the Teddy boy gave way to the Rocker. Still a male dominated group, the Rockers rode motorcycles and exchanged their elegant suits for leather jackets patterned with studs. The Rocker girl still failed to come up with a recognizable image. The Rockers stand halfway between the Teds and the Mods. Mod is an abbreviation of modern,

¹A DA is a hair style made popular by Tony Curtis.
and the developments and changes in mod fashion have hit the headlines many times.

Since the subject under discussion concerns the changes in aesthetic taste, it is perhaps important to note that the most memorable achievements of mind and taste have taken place in those societies which have been very interested in fashion. Elizabethan and Edwardian England and the last two reigns of the French monarchy would be good examples of this. As fashions spread the groundwork of a culture, they are also responsible for bringing about social cohesion. Similar clothes bind people together and put them into categories. Our society is departmentalized by the styles of dress.

After the rise of the Beatles and the resulting interest of youth in the popular arts, it was only to be expected that fashions of youth would reflect this change of interest. The youth had begun to form itself into an articulate group, and the opportunities were ripe for the creating of an exclusive teenage style. In England new developments in the arts tend to come from the colleges and are picked up by the young people, and finally the manufacturers pick them up. This is important because of the influence that youth itself has begun to have by designing for itself.

Finally you're right, things do crawl out of the woodwork here rather than being planted by the manufacturers. I'd put it down to more sophistication among the young and less among the manufacturers.2

Another quotation from Mary Quant, one of the leading young designers of the new fashions, will further illustrate the point.

I was dashing round the wholesalers with Alexander or going round the Art Schools to meet the students and see their work. Art schools are treasure haunts of original design.3

The youth needed clothes to identify themselves as a group; they needed easily wearable clothes that the older generation could not wear. Social standards were changing and the Beatles, symbol of youth's emancipation, had become Britain's ambassadors. Things were moving on out of the accepted behavioral patterns, and into a youth-oriented age when the world seemed to go mad and everyone genuflected to the spontaneity of youth.

To be over twenty-five today means to be dead. If one listens to the songs and poems of youth, one will hear such thoughts expressed as this. "There'll be involuntary euthanasia for everyone over thirty not a poet, painter or musician."4 This is a part of the creative snobbery mentioned earlier, but it stems from a feeling by the youth that, unless one is either young or a creative artist, there is nothing left to live for.

Fashion is always changing and the leaders of the fashion have traditionally been the aristocracy. However, as a rich

3Mary Quant, Quant by Quant (New York, 1965), p. 39.

middle class grew up, fashion began to move out into all sections of society. Once fashion became universal, the elite found themselves in a position of responding to the direction of fashion, rather than setting that direction. It became the thing to be "in" fashion, and the moment the "in" fashion changed, the cycle started again. Thus, fashion is firmly linked to the social scene.

Within the general field of collective behavior, fashion can be regarded as a special kind of social movement. Like all social movements it is rooted in change and it functions as individuals and groups make adjustments to cope with the new developments around them.  

The group which makes the adjustments today is the youth, and the youth are adjusting to the new developments of their own social structure. However, there are varying opinions as to whether fashion influences the other arts, or if changes in the arts influence fashion. There could be a little of both. Herbert Blumer says,

The styles in art, the themes and styles in literature, the forms and themes in entertainment, the perspectives in philosophy, the practices in business and the preoccupations in science may be affected profoundly by fashion. Further, where fashion operates it assumes an imperative position.  

Mary Quant seems to support this position when she speaks of the beginning of the "Chelsea Set." The group was formed


Herbert Blumer, The Nature and Role of Fashion, a paper given at ASA meeting, Montreal, Canada, 1964, p. 2.
before the Liverpool sound came into the public eye.

The unwitting originators of this renaissance were the core and inspiration of a revival of the creative arts. All of them have since achieved something in their particular fields. They were the first genuine break-away group. They are all exciting. Ultimately their ideas had enormous influence on people everywhere and on their way of thinking.  

This group of designers began to design for youth. They wanted an absolutely twentieth-century fashion that belonged solely to the youth. Much of the Chelsea look of 1964 was a revival of old-time fashions from a more fashionable era.

The leader of the group has been identified as Mary Quant. She began training as an art teacher in London, but left college to enter the fashion field. The first shop she opened with Alexander, her husband, was Bazaar in Kings Road, Chelsea. Here she put out her first ideas of a fashion for the young. Some people wondered about her wild window displays, while others fell in love with them. The shop created a sensation. It would be better to set the scene with a quotation from Mary Quant herself.

The Chelsea girl, the original leather-booted, black-stockinged girl who came out of Kings Road looking like some contemporary counterpart of the gay musketeer, began to be copied by the rest of London and watched with interest by others all over the country. Soon the 'Look' was to be copied internationally. This girl's challenging clothes were accepted as a challenge. It was she who established the fact that this latter half of the twentieth century belonged to Youth. I heard my clothes described as dishy, grotty, geary, kinky, mod, poove

Quant, p. 35.
and all the rest of it. But, in fact, no one designer is ever responsible for such a revolution. All a designer can do is to anticipate a mood before people realize that they are bored with what they have already got. I just happened to start when that 'something' in the Air was coming to the boil. The clothes I made happened to fit exactly with the teen-age trend, with pop records and expresso bars and jazz clubs. Never before have so many of the leaders, the trend-setters in all fields of design, been so young.

She deliberately sought out models with the now look, girls with long legs and angular faces, and the latest Sassoon haircuts. Believing that the usual fashion show was unsuitable for her clothes, she began to show them to a background of jazz, taped to prevent stoppages in the music, and her models pranced out at a very fast pace. The models carried objects appropriate to the clothing, such as glasses of champagne with party dresses and sports gear with sport outfits. The first show which she presented this way was a sensation. No one in London had ever used this style of showing before, and it was named "The Method School" by many. Mary Quant experimented in many ways, including introducing plastic to useable designs for skirts, coats, etc. She has been accredited with various "looks," among them The Wet-Weather Look and The Kinky Look. The Garbo revival inspired her to develop a frilly feminine look, and Rudolph Nureyev inspired her to a Russian look. The film Goldfinger sparked off the all-over, pale gold look, and string tops began when she pulled on a man's string vest over

\[8\text{Ibid., p. 74.}\]
a dark dress. Her dresses bowled America over, and Penneys secured her as a designer for a range of young dresses and separates. She has achieved a revolution in that now, rather than the under-twenties wanting to look older, the over-twenties are trying to look under the age of consent.

Mary Quant has also moved into the area of cosmetics, jewelry, foundation garments and, recently, footwear. Using clear plastic for heels and colored plastic for the basic boot, she has designed five simple boots, each coming in a choice of colors. They are sold in a red, shiny plastic bag which has the Quant trademark on it, a five-petalled flower. The boots are known as "Quant Afoot."

Of course there are other young designers who have taken up the youth fashion along with Mary Quant. Sally Tuffin and Marian Foule are op artists who have joined the fashion group and produce wild prints and impossible color combinations. Helen Muir, also one of the London group, began the smock dress with matching bloomers to just above the knee. There are others in the group, and English mod fashions have rapidly become the major British export.

Mod Fashion

It was the Mods who gave the fashion world the impetus to break through into the revolution it has become. It was among the Mods that the teen-age girl really came into her own. When the word mod is mentioned, one sees a fourteen-year-old girl, white-faced and expressionless. Her mouth is
immobile and the lips are almost painted out. Her body is straight as a plank and she seems to deliberately make herself sexually unattractive. She seems to be the face of the teen-age revolution and, in fact, the revolution was born out of that section of a teen-age girl's life between leaving school and getting married. One group of girls took to wearing white T-shirts; dark blue skirts down below their knees, and razor-cutting their hair very close to their heads. They also shaved their eyebrows and foreheads like the ladies in medieval courts. They were nicknamed "Tickets" because they looked as if some machine had made them six cents at a time.

The boys are equally fashion-conscious and wear Cuban-heeled boots, high Eastern collars or wide lapels and suits striped in gaudy colors. The styles tend toward pastels and velvet suits with collarless polo shirts in horizontal stripes, and for foot gear, boots. One Rocker boy in a television interview said that the mod boys were so gorgeous to look at that he could almost fancy them himself. The mecca for mod clothing is Carnaby Street and here one can buy pink denim shirts, crimson leather vests, and tartan pants in vivid colors. Styles can change in a week, obsolescence is the thing. Mod's heroes are called "faces" and when two top "faces," a young couple who demonstrate dances on a BBC program, Ready, Steady, Go, got married recently, they were very conscious of their fashion image.
When they got married last month, Patrick, ever aware of his sartorial responsibilities, wore a curly brimmed grey bowler, velvet collared thigh length jacket and a grey velvet waistcoat. The bride wore a "skinny strapless evening gown."\(^9\)

The biggest revolution in fashion has been the mini-skirt. It is believed to have started when Correges whipped hemlines above the knee and the teen-age girl recognized it as a move for putting her right back in fashion. The Boutique is development of the mod rage for fashion. The young needed a shop in which they could wander around and shop to the latest hit tunes. John Stevens began in Carnaby Street, and working-class boys and girls were his first customers. The stores took strange names, such as "I was Lord Kitchener's Valet," "Gear," and "Hung on You." Carnaby Street has become the symbol of the revolution in teen-age fashion.

The teen-age girl has virtually taken over the fashion world. Older women cannot wear the mini-skirts, hip-hugging belts, wild stockings and jagged boyish haircuts. It's switched on, mad and mod. Today the once-elegant Fifth Avenue is on its knees to get the teen-agers in to buy. Older women are beginning to wonder where they can buy clothes, since everything is turning mini.

The Ultimate Mod--Twiggy

Twiggy has been considered the ultimate mod and seems to be a creation of the advertising world. Most claim her as the

hottest fashion model in the world, but John Fowles goes farther than that when he declares that she is the first portent of a new revolution. During the intellectual ferment in France in the 1700's, the problem seemed to be that the King was losing his appetite for women and thus his malleability by ministers. The courtier Du Barry presented a working-class girl to the King. She took her name from Du Barry himself. Twiggy's swift rise to fame, so Fowles believes, is similar to this. England is in a ferment, and this boyish girl from the working class has moved in on the world of elegant fashion models and taken their place as Du Barry took Pompadour's place. The very sexlessness of her is necessary to the switched-on time. At sixteen she was a school girl in a uniform. At seventeen she has become the quintessence of the London image. Her accent is quaintly Cockney, and the fact that it has not been concealed beneath an acquired "Oxford" accent signifies the vast change from the accepted upper-class image to the vital working-class image. She started to model because it seemed like fun, and her beautifully photogenic face is the secret of her tremendous charm. Her manager, Justin Villeneuve (real name Nigel Davis), first saw the possibilities in her and really promoted her. She became the ultimate picture of mod and, as she rose to the top with her short, boyish hair, Jean Shrimpton, the former top model with long, thick hair, faded from the picture. The analogy which Fowles draws between
England and France is now clear. The image is created of a lower-class "prostitute" who was needed to arouse the passions of over-sated middle-aged England. England has responded to the seduction as did Charles of France.

Twiggy seems to be losing her popularity in England now, and the spate of razor-cut heads that immediately followed her explosion onto the modelling scene seems to be abating. The curly-haired look has come back in again. Are we back to Pompadour?

That all this is closely related to England's socio-economic situation is very evident. England, once controller of an empire, finds herself shrinking to mini-size and her over-exaggerated Victorian expenditure is being drastically reduced. This is no longer the world of the "stiff upper lip" or the white man's burden. Could the wild fashion rage be a form of humorous response to disillusionment? "Historically some of the sharpest changes in costume have followed socially trying events such as war, or have accompanied times of sound disillusionment."10 Mod fashion is just such a sharp change, yet it is not bitter in feeling, it expresses not resentment, but joy. Out of the topsy turvy world of economic decline, the British have responded with humor. There is a contrast to the decaying tweeds of the establishment in the wild, dashing colors of mod fashion. Joy of life is expressed in the

exuberances of the swiftly changing scene, and finally the British have conquered that long-established English institution, rain, with gaily-colored plastic raincoats and caps which refuse to be saturated by the downpour. Perhaps this last is the most significant statement of this new generation. They are refusing to sink beneath the waves in their traditional grey raincoats, saturated and chilled to the marrow. Instead, they are clothing themselves in an impenetrable cloak, which cannot be saturated and which refuses to echo the sorrow of the endlessly falling rain of disillusionment.

To Be or Not to Be—Long—Short

Hair has caused more controversy in the last few years than ever before. The Beatles probably triggered the long-haired look, but ever since, it has been creeping into every section of society. The look now seems to vary between the medieval page boy and the Biblical prophet. There has been comment that at last man's vanity is coming to the fore after many years of suppression.

Perhaps man is coming into his biological destiny, suppressed in our Puritan milieu. It is the male in all nature, you know, who spreads his gorgeous tail feathers and erects his ruff for the inconspicuous little brown mate.11

Another comment is that there is an attempt afoot to blur the distinctions between the sexes. There was even a song about

it a year ago which asked the question, "Are you a boy or are you a girl?". In our society the long-haired person has usually been someone who was a little outside the pale, the artist, poet, musician or eccentric scientist. Now, however, long hair has become identified with youthful protest, too, and we find sections of the society moving into the long-haired arena. The extravagantly long hair of the hippy is confined to the youth, but the respectable long hair of the poet has moved out into the higher cultural circles where artists and politicians rub shoulders. Long hair has been accepted as a fashion trend. It fits in with the dress of the day.

Following the Trend

Pop and op art have been discussed in relation to the art scene and mod in relation to the fashion scene. Now, the two seem to be drawing together. The quoting, by fashion, of art trends began with the Mondrian dresses of a few years ago. Mondrian's style fitted the shift, and so the two became linked for a while. In the exuberance of crazy haircuts, giddy stockings, and ever rising skirts, fashion turned to pop art for inspiration. Pop fashions have already been accepted in America where Crazy Horse puts out a dress with Warhol's Soup Can on it for fifteen dollars. The Mona Lisa reproduced on a dish towel is "out" but a soup can on a party dress is "in."
and their sponsor Big Business, gleams with pride of one who knows he is on the culture-kick too. Pop as fine art has become the handmaiden of commerce. The gear shops who sell mod clothes and the fad shops that sell bric-a-brac, echo the trends first set down for them on canvas.  

The mundane objects so dearly beloved by pop artists have become fashion fads, and the linkage between the fine arts and the popular culture is cemented ever more firmly. The manufacturers have never been slow to follow a trend, and with many people proclaiming the artifacts of America as "beautiful," it was a logical step to cash in on the trend.

Op art also became a quoting source for fashion, and this source has, perhaps, survived the longer of the two. Its designs are more applicable to fabrics and, as mentioned earlier, two London designers, Sally Tuffin and Marion Foule, were op artists who turned to fashion, bringing with them op art's wild designs and dashing colors. As soon as the soup can dress began to ebb in popularity, the eye-teasing optical illusions of op art began to be employed by designers. Bridget Riley designed a dress for Larry Alrich, and Getichio Alviani designed one for the couturier Maricelli. This, however, is rare, for it is the dress designers rather than the op artists who are working on optical illusion materials. There is great scope for the lozenge, circular, or squared-up design, and size is no barrier, for with the birth of hostess culottes, with

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their wide-flowing, dress-like trousers, the op art designers have found the perfect "canvas."

Also, the renowned popularity of Batman and comic books in general have been reflected in the fashion world by the production of dresses printed with comic strips. "Jumpahead" of London is one of the major producers of such dresses, and also produces hats, skirts, and ties to match. The final, absolute last word in dress, as of this moment, is the poster dress. The fantastic popularity of pop posters has made them fair game for the designers. The poster dress is the inevitable merger of the two rages, the pop poster and the paper dress. It happened in London with the formation of a firm called "Poster Dresses, Ltd." The posters are printed up on a new tough, washable, pressable, nonwoven fabric. Once the dress is through as a dress, it can be hung up like a poster. Favorite poster dresses are of people like Bob Dylan and the Beatles. Along with all this has come an increasing popularity for brightly-colored plastic shoes and purses to match.

Today there is more concentration of fashion since a far wider range of people are buying the latest fashions, and the saturation of such fashions is world-wide.

Rudi Gernreich

One of the leading designers in America who makes use of the modern plastics is Rudi Gernreich. He has adopted the mini-skirt and uses it in his latest collection. He is the
man who shocked the world with his topless bathing suit, and was one of the first in the U. S. to raise skirts well above the knee and use colored stockings in what he called the total look. Having introduced vinyl clothes into America, and see-through nylon blouses, he comments, "A woman today can be anything she wants to be—a Gainsborough or a Reynolds or a Reynolds Wrap." He achieves new heights of nudity by using transparent vinyl straps, both in bathing suits and in dresses. Also he inserts clear vinyl bands in his dresses that bare the navel and various parts of the anatomy. He believes that skirts, as such, are disappearing and being replaced by puffy bloomers, pants dresses, or tunics combined with tights.

Gernreich traces his own introduction to fashion all the way back to the age of two when he went on an Italian vacation with his parents. He says of it,

I trailed after a lady who was obviously of ill repute. I say "obviously" because she was very heavily made up, which was unheard of in those days, and she was very colorfully dressed. Her attire was outrageous, and I was terribly attracted to her. I kept following her, and she couldn't get rid of me.14

To sum up his feelings about fashion, he says, "Clothes are not that important, they're not status symbols any longer. They're for fun."15

14Ibid., p. 78.
15Ibid.
Aesthetics

That clothing in all ages has served to emphasize the social distinctions is beyond dispute. Within any given society the design of dress is limited by the aesthetic standards of the culture. However, artistic expression does not have to be cultural in nature; it depends on where one sets the definition of art. One can distinguish between pure and applied art, or one can, with Herskovits, define art as "... any embellishment of ordinary living that is achieved with competence and has desirable form."16 Aesthetics have always been concerned with dress, and in certain ages the linkage was more obvious than today. Mod fashion seems to be moving in the same direction as the other arts. Standards of the past are being cast aside for new ones. The only way to assess the aesthetics of mod dress is in relation to the other arts from which it draws its imagery. Are these designs of today nonaesthetic?

"Design of clothing always has an aesthetic dimension. That which is not popular in aesthetic terms is still measured in aesthetic terms and hence cannot be labelled non-aesthetic."17 So it seems that aesthetics must always apply to dress. A new direction is being established, in terms of aesthetics, in the dress of today.


"Is the mimi-skirt part of a new standard? The answer is 'Yes.' Aesthetic standards for costume are ever changing."

One could go a little further and state that this present fashion trend is a little more than a new standard, it is more in the nature of a new dimension. There is more linkage with the worlds of music and art. One no longer buys a dress to go to hear music or to view an art exhibit. Rather, one wears a dress which evokes the spirit of the music or a dress which is a painting. No longer is the wearer detached from the events—an observer. Now she is part of the event, a painting among paintings, a vibrant psychedelic happening in tune to the music. People dress now to become part of the all-involving scene. This surely is a new dimension to the aesthetics of dress.

18 Ibid.
CHAPTER VII

THE HIPPIES--FLOWERING OF A SUBCULTURE

A Distaste for Society

The hippies have emerged in America in the past eighteen months as a strange, bizarre faction of society consisting of unwashed youths with flowers in their hair. Yet, one must consider why a group of people should choose to drop out of the richest society the world has ever known. If things are really so great, so filled with an abundance of those things which supposedly bring joy and peace, why is it necessary "to tune in, turn on and drop out"? The people who find it necessary to do so for their existence are by no means a majority, as far as the nation goes, but they are there in sufficient numbers. The hippy culture seems to be a permutation of the ethics of American middle-class culture and Eastern mysticism. All those things which are held dear to the heart of America, love, freedom and honesty, are preached by the hippies. The young people seem to be sick of the empty pledges of a love that is really hate, of an honesty that sells itself on the streets and a freedom that is chained and shackled to itself.

"Their professed aim is nothing less than the subversion of Western society by 'flower-power' and force of example."\(^1\)

There is nothing new, of course, in the disgust the hippies feel for society, for many sections of that very society feel the same disgust. It is the way they show their betrayal by society that is challenging. While many stay in the society and try to work the changes from inside the structure, the hippies drop out. It is not new to drop out of society, for, in a sense, people in the past who became hermits, unwashed and holy, dropped out also. The purpose could be similar, too, the promotion of love. The generation who mainly make up the hippie movement find themselves unable to reconcile themselves to the contradictions of contemporary Western society.

The general character of the hippy is white, around seventeen to twenty and of middle to upper-class origin. A society oriented to work, status and power has become meaningless to them, and they hope to generate a new one, rich in spiritual grace. They wish to return love to its Platonic high, from Eros to that all overwhelming love, love that is beyond itself, Agape.

"They reveal the exhaustion of a tradition; Western, production oriented, problem-solving, goal-motivated and compulsive in way of thinking." Marty sees them as spiritually motivated. They like to relate to such figures as Hillel, the first century B. C. Jewish prophet, Jesus Christ, Buddha, and J. R. R. Tolkien's Hobbitts. The beats of the fifties, who have been

\[ \text{Ibid., p. 19.} \]
mentioned in relation to the Beatles, were the fore-runners of the hippies, but the hippy environment is not Bohemia. The beat is a study in black and white, their jazz evocative, whereas the hippies are blindingly vivid in psychedelic colors, and their acid-rock is screechingly painful. The Beatles are major taste-makers in hippiedom and Ravi Shankar has a school in Los Angeles for prospective sitar players.

The Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco is home for the hippies of America. Hippies wander the streets, pan-handling, lounging, or viewing the world. In London they are called flower children and in Holland, the Provos. These last style themselves as the "Provtariat" and are rapidly reducing the Dutch police to nervous wrecks. They stage "happenings" on the streets of Amsterdam, with the main interest being to make authority look silly. The hippies in America have socio-political implications; however, the Provos in Holland have even more. They actively partake of politics by putting out definite plans. One is to rid Amsterdam of its congested traffic. They painted a hundred or so "abandoned" bikes white and put them on the streets as replacement transport. Their ideal is to create a sane, leisurely creative man.

Perhaps the most publicized thing about the hippies has been their communal way of life, the "pads" they choose to live in. Often the household consists of a nonfamily who choose to live with one another. They share everything.
According to sociologists, the most significant contribution made by the hippies to American culture is not the promotion of psychedelic drugs and not the renunciation of materialism, but the innovation of the hippy commune. "If this life-style continues to grow at its present rate" says Tufts University's Richard Fairfield, "marriage and family life will be obsolete in America by the twenty-first century.3

Near Trinidad, Colorado, is a place called "Drop City," where a group of hippies, feeling that Buckminster Fuller's geodesic domes are the shapes of the future, have hammered together domes from old car roofs. In New York there is another pad, called Galahad's Pad, which carries the distinction of having been raided thirty times by the police. Galahad himself professes to be a Christian and claims that Christ watches over the pad. Several rooms of the apartments have mattresses spread over them and here run-away youngsters can bed down together. The communal life is the thing, the surroundings seem not to matter. Many houses are painted inside with glowing psychedelic colors, and the windows are also given the treatment.

Drugs

One cannot discuss the hippie movement without the mention of "tripping" out. It is not proposed to enter into a discussion as to the bad effects of the drugs, since these are related to the medical field. Instead, only the effects of the drugs which relate to changes in consciousness will be

mentioned, since this is the only section of drugtaking which relates to art. Drugs, of course, are not the only way of tripping out, but the main section of the trippers do use drugs. LSD is the most discussed drug on the hippy scene. Lysergid Acid Diethylamide is its scientific name, and it is known as a hallucinogenic drug. LSD produces an eight to ten hour trip, highlighted by profound changes in thought, mood, and activity; mind expansion, it is called. The hermits of ancient history used to induce in themselves varying states of hallucination by means of fasting and scourging. Stylites on his pillar would be very much in style today, with the modern hippie. Now the same effect is achieved by chemistry, and many are turning on to the psychedelic scene. The link with the East is very strong, since the Western and Eastern mystics have sought this mind-expansion by strenuous spiritual exercises. Man has always tried to rise above his everyday self and achieve some insight or release from mundane concerns. There have been mood-changing drugs accepted into our society for a long time. Alcohol is the great relaxer which weakens the mind's grip of things. Caffeine is a spur to the nervous system which strengthens the mind's grip. Now there is LSD, which raises the mind to high lucidity. By far the most common remark by users refers to the intensification of color and the flowing together of shapes.

One of the main exponents of LSD is Timothy Leary, a Harvard faculty drop-out who bases his book, *Psychedelic*
Experience, on the Tibetan Manual of the Dead. He speaks of the psychedelic experience as a journey to a new realm of consciousness. The Tibetan Book of the Dead is a book describing the experiences to be expected at the moment of death, during an intermediate phase of forty-nine days, and during rebirth into another bodily frame. However, this is a cloak for the mystic teachings of the Buddhists, and the esoteric meaning is that of the death and rebirth of the ego, not the body. There are three stages, called Bardos. The first Bardo is the period of ego-loss. The second Bardo is the period of hallucination. The third Bardo is the period of re-entry. This manual has become a major piece of literature for the hippy reader.

Tripping out is a new phrase for an old and hallowed human experience; it is mainly the way a person trips that is different. Drugs need not be used to trip out, and one can be "turned on" by a thousand things, such as an evening breeze. One can fast, physically exhaust oneself, practice yoga and meditation, or simply go for a walk in the woods.

There have been many experiments conducted with LSD, and one in particular has been publicized as the Good Friday study. It was the Ph.D. dissertation of a graduate student at Harvard, and an attempt was made to demonstrate the religious aspect of the psychedelic revelatory experience. It was set out to determine whether the transcendent experience reported during psychedelic sessions was similar to the mystical experiences
reported by saints and mystics. The results showed that with adequate preparation and in a religiously supportive environment, the subjects reported significantly more mystical experiences than in any other environmental situation.

Related Art

The flowing together of images on a psychedelic trip has been the start of a trend in art. Psychedelic art is characterized by the flourishes, spirals and curlicues in camouflaged tones of blues against purple, pinks against red. The term "psychedelic style" was initiated in San Francisco in 1966 by Paul Lee. He talks of a revolutionary social complex called the psychedelic style, of which LSD tripping is only a part.

"All art began as a psychedelic expression to turn others on."¹ One can find parallels to the psychedelic in art history in the work of Blake, Bosch and others. The psychedelic mystic experience is close to the artist's creative vision.

The psychedelic experience has been attempted on film by means of the mandala or meditation-centering image. The mandala is a recurring visionary form, existing within the retinal structure of the eye, and it is possible cinematically to simulate the mandalic phenomenon. Strobe lights are flashed in tune to the rhythmic pulsing of the brain and the mandalic

forms are perceived in the mind's eye. From the psychedelic imagery have come wild art posters and dresses swirling with color.

Two artists working in London are Simon and Marijke, who create psychedelic posters and dresses swirling with color. Their philosophy is to spread the influence of art over every aspect of civilized society, to produce a world throbbing with light and color. Their flat in London is bright with paintings, fragrant with flowers, and loud with music. They are Dutch by origin, and their friends include the Beatles, Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones, and some of London's most beautiful people. Simon and Marijke are part of a new generation of artists who are using pop music and stars and fashion to bring their work before us. They designed the inside of the Sgt. Pepper album. They expand their philosophy,

The essence is love. Love will grow, spread until the whole world is turned on to it. Love will not die. Everybody will turn on to it. The old leaders are dying. Soon there will be new leaders. No, not leaders, spiritual mentors, that is the divine plan.  

Simon and Marijke plan to open a Boutique, which will be more of an environment than a shop. They think that pop fashion, art and design have been too separate in the past, so they want to bring them all together under one roof. Their world is a colorful one full of rainbow-hued paintings and multi-colored clothes.

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The man who perhaps expresses best the world of the hippy in his paintings is Richard Lindler. He has been called the Rubens of the Love Generation. His works are mainly concerned with women of the fleshy, voluptuous type, which Rubens seemed to like. His colors are bright and mainly in the primary and secondary range. Many of his paintings are complicated with backgrounds of multi-colored stripes or many-colored parts.

Only now in the September of his life, has he perfected the high-voltage style that has made him a major force in American art. Does the love generation's greater permissiveness toward overt sexual and occasionally fetishistic representations in art have anything to do with Lindler's emergance?

Yes, the link between Lindler's art and the hippies is in the sexual and fetishistic representations of Lindler. But what of the art that the hippies themselves create? A San Francisco poet, Jack Gilbert, says of them and their art,

They have the courage to take one step—but then they come to a crazy dead stop. They want instant entertainment without any effort. There is a lack of tension in the mind; and how can you have decent art without tension in the mind?

The idea of self-expression is very strong in the hippy culture, but whether the result is always art is another matter. While under the influence of drugs, a person often feels more creative, and often he remains afterwards more creatively aware. However, it has been noted that a person does not actually

show increased creativity in his work while under the influence of drugs. In fact, often the opposite is true for, with the drug, lack of control sets in and the seeing and feeling become heightened, while the power to do is lessened.

**Dress**

The hippy dress is the dress of a subculture. Old army and navy surplus jackets, Oriental robes, Indian headdresses, and many styles of costume are worn. Some wear clothes made from the American flag. Australian digger hats are a favorite headgear. They paint themselves with fluorescent paint and wear feathers glued on to themselves. Flowers are a big part of their dress, and the phrase is, "Zap them with flower power." Bells are also a big thing because of their association with the East and Buddhism. Hippy clothing sets the group apart and enhances the subgroup solidarity. There is no general pattern to hippy dress, no real mod, no inclination to follow fashion.

**Trancendental Meditation**

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi has hit the headlines recently as the spiritual guide of the Beatles. He heads an International Meditation Society, whose British Headquarters is in Grosvenor Square in London. Maharishi has been travelling the world for years, spreading his message, but until the youth turned from drugs to meditation, he had never really been internationally known. He believes he can stop people from taking
drugs through meditation. Meditation is a turning of the mind inward, and once this is achieved, peace is achieved. From here the mind can go on to other things. Although on a BBC television interview he would not say how one can achieve this transcendental meditation, he did say that he started the Beatles off by giving them a manta or syllable to think about. The manta must have no meaning and must resonate with the impulse of the inner man. He believes that holiness belongs to everyone and that eternal life is in the inner being and that one has to sink into being. One must be, in order to think, and one must think, in order to do.

Maharishi has been speaking on campuses around the country. At the Berkeley Campus of the U. S. C. there is a Student International Meditation Society headed by Jerry Jarvis, one of Maharishi's first American disciples. He puts the Guru's message into scientific, nonmystical, Westernized terminology.

Maharishi says that this age demands streamlined methods sacrificing quality. Transcendental Meditation is wholly compatible with living in the modern world. It is a mechanical process; a technique of action. Tension, stress and strain rob man of his ability and decrease his efficiency in action. With meditation, the results are cumulative, but the immediate effects are a release of tension, with more stability in everything you do.

One boy is reported as saying that following his initiation into meditation, he cut his hair, returned to his family, and registered in school again. Transcendental meditation is a

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technique that allows the mind to go to subtler and subtler levels of thought until it gets to that core of thought Maharishi calls being or bliss consciousness, the source of all creativity, peace and happiness. America has begun to turn to meditation and, although there are hippy-like pangs of anguish, most people recognize that much of the hippies' original aim have been lost to acid. To this switched-on generation has come Maharishi with a safe, natural and inexpensive vehicle for the exploration of one's inner being. Maharishi's philosophy at first seems like something one would hear in Haight-Ashbury. His philosophy is that life should not be a struggle and that men are born to enjoy life and they should have full freedom of action. It is easy for young people to assume that Maharishi is the ultimate hippy and the supreme dropout; however, he is really on a different trip. He is definitely against the use of drugs to trip out on and says emphatically that they should be restricted to their medical use. He tells young audiences that they must learn to love, respect and obey their parents. Some people have the idea that a psychedelic high is the same experience as bliss through meditation. This idea, Maharishi says, is confused nonsense.

The hippies, whose influence far exceeded their numbers, served as shock troops who helped push this search into radical new areas, but their drug-flattened world became unsupportable without the necessary chemicals and the hippie movement in general became so commercialized and over populated that there was no longer any sense of identity within it. The boom in meditation is based, in part, on the
realization that drugs are just one pathway toward emphasis of sensory experience . . . and the most hazardous pathway at that.9

Aesthetics

The main considerations in relation to art and aesthetics in the hippy movement are in connection with psychedelic art. However, do aesthetics really enter into this type of art? The obvious connection with Art Nouveau can be clearly seen, yet this is a super-imposed imagery. The flowing together of images of a psychedelic high are the only real contribution of hippy art. Psychedelic art has been received by the public in general. Maybe it catches the essence of the age, with its noise, light and movement. Since the advent of pop, the public is more receptive to art, and quickly absorbs the various directions taken. Psychedelic art seems to be more of a passing phase, which is linked more to the movement than to art itself.

American business has never been slow to jump in on a movement from which there was any profit to be gained. The youth movement is just such a movement, and we have witnessed a vast promotion of youth by business. When the Beatles came on the scene, the market was swamped with Beatle wigs, T-shirts, wallpaper, etc. Most teen-age communication depends on big business, the record companies, the clothing manufacturers, and television companies. The things teen-agers buy seem to be personal indulgences, but in fact they are all commodities of social contact. In the broadest sense, clothes, songs, etc. are channels of communication. There has been a struggle going on, forcing the aesthetic school into the position that what is not mass-produced is desirable, but at the same time mass-production is the only way it can be supplied. Obviously, in mass production mass suitability must be taken into consideration, and the standardization and anonymity of a mass-produced object has become a positive aesthetic virtue. When bought by all classes, a mass-produced object, such as a mini-car in England, transcends the class barriers. The super ad-agencies are selling everybody an idea of super youth. The young wear the latest geary clothes; the young drive the latest
groovy car. They dance to the latest hit tunes, wear the maddest, moddest, newest make-up and hosiery. In fact, the youth leads the rest of the world by the nose, or so it would seem according to the ad-men.

Why are the youth leading us at the present moment? The manufacturers hold a large portion of the responsibility, but maybe the fact that the youth were born into this fast-moving world, have been educated in it and understand it explains why they and not their parents are alive and in tune with the world.

Mod

Since mod fashion hit the headlines, much of the advertising has gone mod, too. In fact, it has pushed mod into a far greater prominence than it could ever have held before. Mod became the "in" thing. A hair-dressing preparation, Dippity-Do, brought in its mod rollers. These were large plastic rollers to set hair on, which were decorated with flowers. Yardley began advertising the "London Look" in their cosmetic range. Lipsticks were manufactured attached to key chains and in the form of whistles attached to chains to hang around the neck. The buying public were confronted with mini-skirts, mini-purses, mini-make-up kits, in fact mini everything. Also in England came the wearing of the Union Jack on dresses, carrier sacks, scooters and almost anything at all.
Op and Pop

Op art and pop art began to seep more into the market. Paper-mate and various other companies produced the op-pen, printed with colorful designs, based on op paintings. The market was flooded with op table mats, dish towels, and op aprons. Furniture manufacturers produced breakfast sets with pink tables surrounded with green, orange and yellow chairs, with op-designed tie-on cushions.

Psychedelics

The art of the psychedelic drug scene seeped out into the mass market. Psychedelic lettering is seen everywhere in posters, magazine advertisements, and on billboards. Art Nouveau is seen, particularly in ads. Pages crawl with intertwined flowers, in the best Art Nouveau tradition. Sometimes the shades are pastel and sometimes they are glowing psychedelic colors. Shoe advertisements are set against backgrounds of swirling color and underwear blossoms out in "trip-out" colors. Glow, glow, go, seems to be the manufacturers' exhortation to all. Hanes has come out with a stocking called "flower pow." in bright colors with flowers on the sides. What happened to the image of staid Hanes' quality hose? They too have joined the psychedelic rage. Montag has produced a range of psychedelic Art Nouveau-inspired stationary. Tussy has come up with a range of lipsticks called Psychedelips. The lipsticks are in glowing electric colors, seeming to echo
the electric environment. They are advertised as switched-on, and "mouth-power." They are what the "beautiful people" wear, and when you "turn on" with this lipstick, you can expect a real "love-in." Everything, even the language, has been taken from the hippies' subculture, and industry is appealing to people on this level.

Body painting has also become a rage. The New York Art Directors show in 1967 photographed a girl painted in psychedelic patterns, and used the photograph as a cover design for their brochure to advertise the show. Body painting has been practiced by primitive peoples for many generations, and it is a tribal manifestation. This electric revolution has created a recurrence of the tribal stigmata, and body painting has become a fashion, a tribal identification.

The television advertisers also pick up the latest craze and popularize it through repetition. A notable advertisement currently being shown is the Hunt Tomato Ketchup ad, which swings into the psychedelic world. *Punch*, the British humor magazine, has used psychedelic designs on its covers recently. One in particular shows an Eastern stone-sculptured head, plain on one side but painted in psychedelic colors on the other side. Also, there are paper carriers in England decorated with close contrast colors in psychedelic designs. Why should art and culture suddenly become very big business? McLuhan says, "The information explosion knocks down walls between culture and business."

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CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The social revolution of this age is obviously at the bottom of all changes in relation to aesthetics. Never before have people been surrounded by colors and images advancing and receding in electrical succession. Gone is the time of the lamp, with the quietly falling evening and the slow-moving from youth to age. Gone is the feeling of a controlled environment. In exchange, the electric light dominates, day and night. In fact, night has almost disappeared with round-the-clock electricity. The environment is no longer controllable, nor is it restricted. It reaches out across the world, touching everyone. The world has almost shrunk to the size of a global village, yet it has not that closeness of primitive times.

People are constantly in contact, yet isolated; involved, yet somehow uninvolved; aware, and yet unaware. The bombardment of intense, confusing images on the modern man's consciousness results in over-saturation. Sequential, logical thought and reasoning cannot deal with the instant all-surrounding media, and the necessity is for instant awareness.

In this jungle of technology, youth and the creative artists and thinkers in every field seem to be the only people who are aware of the tremendous battle between established
culture and the new, emerging culture. Standards of yester-
year can no longer apply. Such a situation as exists today
has never existed before, and there are no set behavioral
patterns for it. Now most would see the folly of comparing a
Memling to a Picasso; they belong to different ages. Yet men
still compare the art of the past with the art of now.

To state that the artist today is creating a nonaesthetic
would appear invalid. As already stated in quotations by Mary
Ellen Roach and Edward Lucie-Smith, there is no such thing as
nonaesthetic. Aesthetic criteria must always apply to art,
it is merely the degree of aesthetic which varies.

It is equally certain that the arts of today are not a
continuation of the old aesthetic order, for the old aesthetic
was formed in an age when electricity had not been discovered.
Modern man judges the aesthetic value of a Memling in relation
to the medieval social structure. Today, pop art has to be
judged in relation to our present social structure. The same
aesthetic values cannot be applied to the two ages.

The aesthetic climate is changing, taking on a new di-
mension. Today music is synonomous with involvement, it
expresses the environment from which it is born and cradles
the listener in sensation. One is meant to experience the
totality of the modern music and it cannot be detached from
electricity. Many instruments have been amplified by elec-
tricity, and we are hearing today sounds which have never been
heard in any time before. People who cannot adjust to the
modern music wander bewildered at what they believe is a complete loss of standards in taste. However, those people who are in tune with the electric environment accept, understand, and rejoice in this new, all-involving dimension of aesthetic.

In art, many influences enter in when considering the new direction that aesthetics are taking. We are confronted, for the first time in history, with images which most of the world recognizes and identifies with. That pop art has been so popular testifies to the hunger people have for an art form which is linked to life. Our lives today are full of sounds, reverberating in our ears and reaching deep into our consciousness. We are surrounded by visual images in the form of electric signs, flickering and attracting our attention constantly. The art of the eighteenth century will no longer suffice in this electric world.

Art, music, dress and literature are firmly linked today and the bounds between the fields are rapidly falling before the communications explosion. The linking factor is the electric environment, and sound, visual and sensory experiences are stimulated by this vast commercial jungle which the ad-men call home. The worlds of art, music and literature are being used by big business to sell products, and they in turn are using big business to sell themselves. Electricity has welded together day and night, and the continents of the world are in instant communication. The telephone is instantaneous and partially discards the written letter as time-consuming. The
sequential letter form is time-consuming, and one carries the whole world in one's ear. The visual, oral and sensual arts have banded together to present an instant communication that one carries in one's mind as a complete image.

Aesthetics have become, not a separate measurement of tastes and standards, but an all-involving sensory pressure, something we are aware of, alive in, and concerned with. No longer can a measuring stick be taken to judge an art form's worth, for the art form stands no longer alone, but has penetrated all fields of business and endeavor, even to the point where one is wearing the latest pop painting on one's underwear. A new dimension of aesthetic has been established which surrounds one, cradles one in an environment of nowness and total, in-depth awareness and involvement.
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