Zita, Antonín

The United States of the fifties and the sixties: an introduction

3 THE UNITED STATES OF THE FIFTIES AND THE SIXTIES: AN INTRODUCTION

> You're standing on the outside looking in... There's a barrier and you don't know how to begin breaking it down. You imagine [other people] keep watching the way you look, the way you act. They think you're different. So you head for home. What else? But still you can't forget you're alone. An outsider. (*Shy Guy*)

Titled *Shy Guy*, this 1947 educational short movie is aimed at teenagers who have difficulties making friends in unknown settings. The movie details the struggles of Phil, a new student at a local high school, who is trying to merge with the school crowd. Phil eventually succeeds by inviting his schoolmates over to his home to listen to Phil's hand-made record player. Granted, successful socializing with one's peers is an important part of one's life and perhaps even more so for a teenager. Nevertheless, the short movie is also emblematic of post-WWII America. If one were to characterize the decade following the war, "return to normalcy" would be a good contender for such characterization.[9]

3.1 The Era of Conformity

The Depression and the Second World War were over, and the nation sighed with relief. After two trying decades Americans could finally live freely and relish the

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9   It should be noted that the original "return to normalcy" took place in 1920, when Warren G. Harding used it as his campaign slogan to win the presidential election, thus announcing the period of twelve years of Republican presidents in America after the First World War. A similar return was then wished for after the Second World War. I would like to thank Dr. David Chroust, Texas A&M University, for pointing this out.

sudden economic boom that the United States, unlike the countries ravaged by the war, enjoyed in the years that followed. The booming economy was not the only cause for the high spirits that many felt during this period; as David Sterritt enumerates, other contributing factors to the general sense of ease were the recent American successes on the battlefield, new developments in science and technology, the relative improvement of middle-class lives, or the emerging political dominance of the United States which replaced Europe as the largest imperialist power (20). Importantly, these developments led to a heightened sense of the need to conserve these achievements, a process that in turn led to the general understanding of the 1950s as a decade of conformity and consensus. For instance, James Guimond describes the portrayal of Americans in popular photography as "parts of a huge network of entities, institutions, and communities that nurtured and encouraged them to become healthy, normal citizens" (217). As the quote from *Shy Guy* suggests, being "normal" here means being like everyone else and this attitude was omnipresent in postwar society. Conformity, Guimond further explains, was served to the public through images of consumerism and cheerful corporate employees, "I Like Ike" buttons worn by voters, or flag-salute montages shown at the end of the day on television channels; these and other images, often distributed by picture magazines such as *Life* or *Look*, ultimately had the same message: it was right to conform and right to be an American (213–14).

"Conformity" is also the word that best describes the emergence of suburbia and Levittowns. The latter, large suburbs built in an assembly-line fashion mostly for returning veterans, are described by the historian Lewis Mumford as the following:

> [A] multitude of uniform, unidentifiable houses, lined up inflexibly, at uniform distances, on uniform roads, in a treeless communal waste, inhabited by people of the same class, the same income, the same age group, witnessing the same television performances, eating the same tasteless prefabricated foods, from the same freezers, conforming in every outward and inward respect to a common mold, manufactured in the central metropolis. (486)

The unity and uniformity of the nation became indistinguishable. To be a good citizen was to accept the conformist lifestyle that was encouraged not only through ideologies such as religion or the belief in capitalism, but also through seemingly unrelated aspects of American life; unified housing development or the increasing use of cars in everyday life in effect further promoted a unity in lifestyles to the point of a wide-scale sameness. The best way to conform was to consume American goods; after all, the production of consumer goods was according to the President's Council of Economic Advisors the "ultimate purpose" of being American (qtd. in Sterritt 21). Tellingly, the choice to conform is the first solution

to gaining new friends offered to "shy guy" Phil: when he complains to his father that everyone in his school wears sweaters rather than a regular suit like he does, his knowing father answers simply: "Wear a sweater then!"

The fifties were mostly marked by fear of the Other – the foreign and unknown – which was commonly represented by the communist Soviet Union. Its beginning can be traced to August 1949 when the Soviets created their first atomic bomb, thus starting a vicious arms race which to many Americans represented a real possibility of nuclear war between the two nations. The art of the nuclear age, for example Leonard Baskin's life-sized woodcut *The Hydrogen Man*, frequently reacted to the possibility of nuclear annihilation by reflecting uncertainty and ambiguity in their art (Johnston 223). The omnipresent fear of the Soviets and everything related to them also led to the Red Scare of the McCarthy era, which targeted government officials for being suspected communist sympathizers working on undermining the American government. This fearmongering naturally made its way into school textbooks such as Bragdon and McCutcheon's *History of a Free People* (1954). The description of the omnipresent "communist menace" used in the textbook is the following: "Unquestioning party members are found everywhere. Everywhere they are willing to engage in spying, sabotage and the promotion of unrest on orders from Moscow" (qtd. in Whitfield 33). Being a Communist was seen as being in direct opposition to American values and ideals, and as a result many people lost their jobs due to such accusations.[10]

The Red Scare in effect aroused the suspicion of otherness in American culture: not only was the country preoccupied by the image of the Soviets conquering the USA, but also a significant segment of the public approved of many policies that targeted another group deemed dangerous for the country's security – homosexuals. For example, Billy Graham, the Protestant Christian evangelist, in a 1953 public broadcast praised FBI agents "who, in the face of public denouncement and ridicule, go loyally on in their work of exposing pinks, the lavenders, and the reds who have sought refuge beneath the wings of the American eagle" (qtd. in Whitfield 45), thus equalizing apparent supporters of socialism as well as homosexuals with the Cold War-era Soviet Union. Besides, sexual prudery was rampant, thus not only making any meaningful discussion of gender roles impossible, but also further heightening fears against homosexuals (Sterritt 21). Sex was naturally something that people longed for. Nevertheless, the 1950s were a time of

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10   The FBI often kept files on artists considered controversial or even anti-American. For instance, it has been recently revealed that the FBI suspected the science fiction writer Ray Bradbury of being a communist sympathizer. Describing science fiction as a possibly "lucrative field for the introduction of communist ideologies," the FBI's informant also states that the purpose of sci-fi literature "is to frighten the people into a state of paralysis or psychological incompetence bordering on hysteria," thus spreading the belief that a possible Third World War could not be won (Brown). The report also describes some of Bradbury's stories as "definitely slanted against the United States and its capitalistic form of Government [*sic*]."

sexual prudery, therefore sexual intercourse was generally conceived as limited to marriage only, and as a study of more than four thousand adults showed, the majority of the study's participants thought of people who did not marry as sick, immoral, selfish, or neurotic (May 166). Put differently, the rules regarding gender roles, albeit unwritten, were clear and these rules naturally had the most impact on women. As the journalist Calvin Trillin recalls, job positions for *Time* magazine were so tiered that the best a woman could hope for was to become a researcher for the magazine (*New York*). Being a writer, the hierarchy of the magazine indicated, was solely a man's job.

The majority of cultural production during the 1940s and 1950s was more than content with this state of things. In fact, many cultural producers such as Hollywood cinema generally served as de facto guardians of traditional values and the status quo (Sterritt 6). During her first visit to the United States, Simone de Beauvoir was greatly surprised by the apoliticism prevalent in artistic and intellectual circles (Lindey 103). This was, as Lindey further explains, one of the emerging effects of the Cold War. Since culture was the battleground where "the enemy" was faced in hopes of preserving the right values, authors such as William Faulkner or John Steinbeck were often criticized for shining a light on the deficiencies of American society, thus causing the outside world to view the country in a more negative fashion than they otherwise would have (Sterritt 22). Importantly, some authors could not be published in the USA, thus smuggling became the only way to obtain the works of writers such as James Joyce or Henry Miller (Goodman 96). Popular culture reflected the general mood of society, thus science fiction movies like *The Thing from Another World* were often interpreted as portraying society's fear of communism. Such films thus represented an increased push toward conformity in American society.

The word "conformity," Thomas Frank notes, entered the vernacular due to publications such as David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* or *The Organization Man* by William H. Whyte, Jr., and debates on consumerism, conformity, mass-production, and the corporate world thus became common by the end of the fifties (10–11). Consequently, these themes were also frequently featured in works of fiction, for example Frederick Wakeman's *The Hucksters* or Sloan Wilson's *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (36–38). The protagonist of *The Hucksters*, Frank notes, was able to withstand the environment of an advertising company which stifled his individualistic and creative character by quitting the job; in contrast, while Tom Rath, the main character of *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, is able to somewhat resolve the issues of his demanding work, he is too entrenched in his world of happy suburban family life, daily commute and corporate work to imagine any alternative to this lifestyle (36, 38). The United States had thus fully embraced consumerism and conformism and denounced everything even vaguely resembling a threat to the existing state of affairs.

In a way, conformity was also anchored in the literary criticism prevalent at that time. The formalist New Criticism dominating American universities in the middle decades of the twentieth century rejected its predecessor, a more traditional criticism in the manner of Matthew Arnold, which focused on a biographical reading of the text's author as the correct way of interpreting a text. Also dismissing the more recent Freudian approach, this formalist approach is best exemplified by W. K. Wimsatt, Jr. and M. C. Beardsley, the authors of two texts central to New Criticism, "The Intentional Fallacy" and "The Affective Fallacy." These texts warn against the two fallacies of literary criticism: while the former advises against critics trying to answer the question, "What did the author mean by the text?", the latter claims that emotive reader responses should not be a part of literary scholarship. In "The Intentional Fallacy" Wimsatt and Beardsley explain that "the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art" (468). They support their argument by explaining that once published, a poem is not owned by its author or by the critic reviewing it but rather by the public (470–71). Readers are neither required nor expected to read the author's secondary materials explaining the text in order to understand it; ultimately, interpreting the work happens in public, and therefore should not be bound by its author (482, 477).

"The Affective Fallacy" addresses the reader's response to the text. While it acknowledges that readers can respond emotively to a work of art, they claim that this should not be the focus of literary criticism (45). An account of a reader's response to a poem or a play is, according to the critics, only an account of *how* these emotions were induced and therefore supply the very same response to the readers of the critique (47). It is therefore necessary to ignore not only the causes of the poem (the author and his intention), but also its results (what the poem does to the reader), as the former leads to a psychological account and the latter to impressionism and relativism (31). Wimsatt and Beardsley summarize their stance in the opening of "The Affective Fallacy" by the following: "The outcome of either Fallacy, the Intentional or the Affective, is that the poem itself, as an object of specifically critical judgment, tends to disappear" (31).

For the New Critics, the literary work stands on its own from the world which produced it, and therefore should be approached as such. This concept of literature as isolated from society naturally is not without merit. However, it also ignores that art simply cannot exist without context. By viewing art as existing in vacuum, such an approach fails to acknowledge other values of art outside its formal elements, and therefore has difficulties explaining the possible variations in interpretation and art's role in general.

3.2 The Other America

Yet viewing the fifties as a decade dominated by conformity and consumerism would be a mistake. As the historian David Halberstam explains, the fifties signaled the vital changes American society would undergo one decade later (*The Fifties: The Fear & the Dream*). One of the important changes that started in the fifties was the increased focus on discrimination against African Americans. The landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision ended the segregation of educational facilities and had a far-reaching effect on American society. Several Southern states resisted the ruling and many whites tried to intimidate blacks, through racial slurs or violence, and to deter them from asserting their rights. Nevertheless, the Civil Rights Movement gained further momentum after Rosa Parks refused to leave a bus seat designated for white passengers only. The resulting boycott, which lasted thirteen months, forced bus companies to stop discriminating against African-American passengers. The Civil Rights Movement continued protesting segregation in other places, such as restaurants or retail stores, by organizing sit-ins, a form of non-violent protest. Eventually, these protests led to the Freedom Rides in the early sixties; still, some were dissatisfied with the slow progress of the struggle for civil rights. Unlike Martin Luther King, Jr., the civil rights leader who advocated non-violence as a means of protest, Malcolm X dismissed the non-violent approach, instead advocating that integration with whites was not needed. Furthermore, Malcolm X famously argued that African Americans should be able to achieve justice "by any means necessary," thus creating a divide in the approach to obtaining civil rights for African Americans. While he had been considered a controversial figure during his lifetime, Malcolm X brought the issue of racial discrimination into the urban areas of the United States, thus having a significant impact on the years to come.

    Simply put, the fifties were a complicated period. On the one hand, most of the adult population was trapped in an elaborate maze of social conformity built on fear, hostility, and a wish to enjoy the peace after decades of struggle; on the other hand, many adults experienced personal prosperity and affluence for the first time in their lives after working hard during the trying years of the Depression era (Cook 10). As Bruce Cook continues, the road to achieving middle-class life was so difficult for the generation of the Depression era that they "embraced [its] values and symbols … with the all fervor of religious converts." That being said, there were several areas in the United States which showed clear signs of non-conformity even before this period. One such place was Greenwich Village, which was an important center where liberally-oriented people, a large art scene, numerous jazz concerts, and a thriving theater scene converged on a daily basis. "Where could a rebel and a freethinker settle but in Greenwich Village?" the writer Alfred Kazin asks rhetorically (*The Ballad*). Similarly, the novelist Dan Wakefield defines

the Village as the place where people came to flee Eisenhower's America and find a group of likeminded souls (*New York*). The Village was where William Faulkner or e.e. cummings wrote their works, where Maya Angelou recited her poetry in various nightclubs, and where places such as the Gaslight Cafe showcased Gregory Corso or Allen Ginsberg (*Ballad*). Importantly, Greenwich Village was known for its large degree of acceptance uncommon at that time. For instance, the Village had had a large jazz scene since the 1920s and as a result housed a large number of jazz clubs, one such club being the Café Society, the first racially integrated jazz club in the United States. The Village also had a significant homosexual scene and while acts of discrimination did occur, the place in general was certainly more welcoming than the rest of the United States. Simply put, New York was a place which had a significant impact on its inhabitants: as Dan Wakefield explains, rather than marrying the girl next door and entering corporate life, the people of New York, and especially of the Village, "[had] decided to take risks" (*New York*). As Wakefield then succinctly summarizes, Greenwich Village was the place where one went to escape the average.

As the fifties continued, a widening generation gap became more apparent. The growing discontent was evident not only in politics but also when it came to such things as musical preferences; the rise of rock and roll music symbolized the young generation's willingness to simply stop listening to their parents' music and find something just for themselves (*The Fifties: The Beat*). Dissenting voices suddenly emerged and voiced their dissatisfaction with the contemporary cultural climate. One such voice being the literary critic Maxwell Geismar, who in 1958 criticized *Time* and *Life* magazines for "laying down a program for a new slap-happy optimism mingled with a proper respect for whatever exists and a species of domestic drama that will avoid all bad language and all serious human issues" (14). Geismar continues by denouncing conformity in literature that tries

> to persuade millions of people that they are completely different from all the other people whom they are exactly like. 'Peace, Prosperity, and Propaganda' will be the grand theme of the new literature, and all deviants from the norm, whether biological or esthetic or ethnic, will be tolerated so long as they do what they are told". (37)

Suddenly, the values and lifestyle held dear by the generation of parents were seen as something to be resisted and even refused outright by the new generation. The San Francisco poet Kenneth Rexroth summarized the sudden turmoil of the young generation in the 1950s with the following:

> The youngest generation is in a state of revolt so absolute that its elders cannot even recognize it. The disaffiliation, alienation, and rejection of the young has, as far as their

elders are concerned, moved out of the visible spectrum altogether. Critically invisible, modern revolt, like X-rays and radioactivity, is perceived only by its effects at more materialistic social levels, where it is called delinquency. (324)

Here Rexroth touches upon an important aspect of the average middle-class person toward the young generation: the young were often seen as nothing more than primitive and barbaric delinquents without proper values or faith, an image especially pertinent to the reception of the group of young authors who came to be known as the Beat Generation. While they did enjoy a certain amount of success, their work was controversial and often deemed inappropriate or even immoral, as evidenced by the obscenity charges levied against *Howl* and *Naked Lunch*. Bruce Cook sees the Beat Generation as exemplary of "the pull of opposites" which, he argues, is one of the facts of American life. According to Cook, the evidence of various opposites and the fissures they cause were seen everywhere: the generation gap, the differences between the individual states and even sections of the country, the splits between different ethnicities and lifestyles (21). Simply put, Americans were destined to experience abrupt and traumatic challenges in the 1950s.

3.3 The Monopoly Crumbles

The Beats were among those calling for change in American society, and contemporary academia and its understanding of what poetry should be was among the institutions Beat poets rebelled against. Centered around such magazines as *The Kenyon Review* or *Partisan Review,* these academics guarded the official high-brow culture in such a way that they were considered "The Enemy" of the Bohemians of the fifties (Rexroth 337). After all, the most vocal critics of the Beats in the fifties, Norman Podhoretz and Diana Trilling, both represented academia and both wrote for the *Partisan Review.* Furthermore, these high-brow intellectuals frequently dismissed mass culture such as popular music or television shows as not worth their time (Frank 11).

Nevertheless, the seeds of the discord between the Old Left intelligentsia and the Bohemianism of the Beats started to appear a decade earlier, when in 1944 Allen Ginsberg, at that time a freshman at Columbia College, became a student of Lionel Trilling (Wilentz). Trilling, a leading literary critic and the husband of Diana Trilling, was an old member of the Popular Front and while both Ginsberg and Trilling considered the close reading of the New Criticism as a wrong approach to literature, they differed in their actual understanding of what literature should be. For Trilling, literature was a way to affirm "a skeptical liberalism"

through the understanding of the difficulties of modern life (Wilentz). Ginsberg, however, could not disagree more. What he wanted from literature was a form of transcendence which emphasized actual experiences. According to Ginsberg, art should be available to people and should not be limited to the academic elite. As a result, Trilling's distant musings offered only ephemeral understanding rather than lasting results, thus, in Ginsberg's view, contributing to the conformity of American society. Furthermore, the attitudes of the new bohemia, to which the Beats belonged, were significantly different from those of the labor-centered Old Left. As Sean Wilentz explains, "Ginsberg and the Beats, with their mysticism, sexual frankness, and individualism, were politically unreliable as far as the Popular Front veterans were concerned." The emphasis of the old intellectuals on high-brow culture was strongly opposed to the Beats' elevation of everyday experiences, thus both groups viewed one another as their direct opposites.

Beats, in their refusal to adhere to strict form in their poems, espoused a significantly different understanding of poetry than the academic poets. Since these different concepts of poetry did not follow the established criteria of New Criticism – the esthetic form trumps everything else – academic poets were prompted to label Beat poetry as nonsensical and substandard. The Beats were not the only ones who faced opposition from academia; as Justin Quinn shows in the example of poets Edwin Rolfe or Thomas McGrath, one would be hard-pressed to find radical leftist ideas present in mainstream 1950s poetry (112–13). The formalist approach of academic poets frequently discounted a substantial amount of their poems as second grade due to their politically-charged message (113). What is more, not only did these writers have issues with publishing their work, but they also had to endure a backlash in other spheres of life as well.[11]

Outside of academia, the Beats were joined by other artists working with different media in their refusal to follow the established rules. By the end of the fifties, the American folk music revival was in full swing, thus seeing a music club next to a poetry café was a common occurrence (Wilentz). The demand for the new folk music was so high that for instance the Gaslight Cafe in Greenwich Village, although initially focused on Beat poetry, soon transitioned into a more folk-oriented establishment (*Ballad*). Aspiring Beat poets and folksingers thus often shared the same space and while they did not share their taste in music, they did share a "disdain for consumerist materialism and conventional 1950s dress and mores" (Wilentz). Beat poetry certainly had an influence on emerging folksingers, as can be seen with Bob Dylan. It was not the poetic style, but rather the performance of Beat poetry as well as a feeling of alienation toward society that is reflected in

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11   For instance, in 1947 Rolfe lost his job in Hollywood to the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Dylan's work. Moreover, Dylan was also impressed by the ability of the Beat poets to play with language, something he tried to emulate in his singing.

The connection of the Beats to Dylan was not by any means overt, yet it was noticeable; for example, in 1963 Lawrence Ferlinghetti discussed with Dylan the possibility of publishing his writing in the City Lights Pocket Poets Series (Wilentz). Furthermore, Allen Ginsberg had a substantial impact on Dylan and his work. In the early sixties, the Beats as an organized movement were often considered to have ended and at the same time Dylan was about to change his music toward a more rock-oriented sound. Ginsberg and Dylan, having met for the first time in 1964, started influencing each other and their mutual respect and artistic support soon became public knowledge.[12] Dylan, who had by the time of their first meeting already penned the protest songs "Blowin' in the Wind" and "The Times They Are a-Changin,'" thus gained an important ally for his social commentaries (Wilentz). As Wilentz further explains, "[a]s a cultural revolutionary, antibourgeois seer, and antagonist of the academy, Ginsberg commanded respect on the left. Above all, Ginsberg stood for literary seriousness, on a level far above what even the most talented folkie lyricist, let alone rock and roller, could hope to attain." Conversely, as the Beat Generation as a movement slowly faded out, it was Dylan's influence which enabled Ginsberg to become "a kind of older avatar of the late-1960s counterculture – for the poet, a new kind of fame" (Wilentz). Dylan, quickly becoming an important voice of the emerging counterculture of the 1960s, had obtained in Ginsberg a sort of guru and by incorporating Beat esthetics into his work he had become a prominent voice of the 1960s.

Simply put, the changes American society had undergone during the two decades were numerous. African Americans, women, and homosexuals were among the groups voicing their concerns and demanding sweeping changes to American society, and were soon joined by university students across the country's campuses. Beat writing and Ginsberg's public persona helped promote different lifestyles and attitudes, which resulted in the rapid growth of the hippie subculture. Furthermore, the so-called "British Invasion" of rock music only further contributed to the growing discontent in American society. These and other events soon converged and created the counterculture of the 1960s, which had a profound impact on the country for decades to come. And partly due to Dylan, Ginsberg had become one of its leading figures.

Not everyone was welcoming of the changes occurring during this period. For numerous conservatives, the counterculture was responsible for many social ills and issues. Commentators such as Allan Bloom or Robert Bork thus often viewed the sixties as a failure of American society, and this perspective was especially

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12   For example, a year later Dylan included Ginsberg on the cover of his seminal album *Bringing It All Back Home* (1965), and also featured Ginsberg in the video clip for one of the album's song, the famous "Subterranean Homesick Blues."

common among the conservative and the devout. As David A. Noebel, pastor and religious leader, wrote in his 1965 pamphlet "Communism, Hypnotism and the Beatles," the music of "the Beatles "isn't 'art-form' at all, but a very destructive process" (14). He continues with the following:

> Teenage mental breakdown is at an all time high and juvenile delinquency is nearly destroying our society. Both are caused in part by emotional instability which in turn is caused in part by destructive music such as rock and roll and certain kinds of jazz. But no matter what one might think about the Beatles or the Animals or the Mindbenders, the results are the same – a generation of young people with sick minds, loose morals and little desire or ability to defend themselves from those who would bury them. (14)

Thomas Frank explains that commentators such as Noebel often see the era in one of the following ways. The sixties are either "a moral drama of millennialist utopians attempting to work their starry-eyed will in the real world, … a time of excessive affluence, … a time of imbalance in the eternal war between the generations, or … the fault of Dr. Spock, who persuaded American parents in the lost fifties to pamper their children excessively" (3). However, a view of a culture losing its qualities largely stems from the belief that there is only one culture present at a time as well as from a rather romantic portrayal of artists as those with absolute freedom over their art (Hesmondhalgh 16, 20). The conservative myth of the 1960s then relies on a simple dynamic – nostalgia for things past – yet it fails to acknowledge the possibility that the object of its critique had already been present in American culture, and that it was the monolithic and dominant culture of conformity which prevented other cultures from flourishing.

 The conservative right is not the only group in the American political spectrum which mythologizes the history of the counterculture. Eventually, historical accounts become simplified, contexts blurred, and sources cherry-picked to such a degree that a less than accurate portrayal of the events emerges. However, the myth of the left – the unsavory nature of mainstream culture opposed by rebellious youth and their idealistic views – is certainly much more accurate than the conservative interpretation (Frank 5–6). Still, it cannot help but rely on another oft-repeated myth – that the counterculture of the 1960s eventually sold out to the mainstream (14–15). Rather than relying on such binary definitions, Thomas Frank points out that the advertising world of the 1950s and 1960s wanted change as well, as documented by various ads and managerial handbooks (24–25). Many hippies were in fact avid consumers and "hip" consumerism existed prior to the rise of the counterculture (30, 136). As Frank explains, "[t]he counterculture served corporate revolutionaries as a projection of the new ideology of business, a living embodiment of attitudes that reflected their own" (27). In other words,

it was the attitude of the consumer culture – and not of the counterculture itself – that changed. Unlike many social critics, Frank further points out, advertising companies and corporations readily adapted to the rebellious attitude of the sixties. This indicates a crucial point: the birth of the counterculture of the 1960s was not a matter of *if*, but rather *when*.