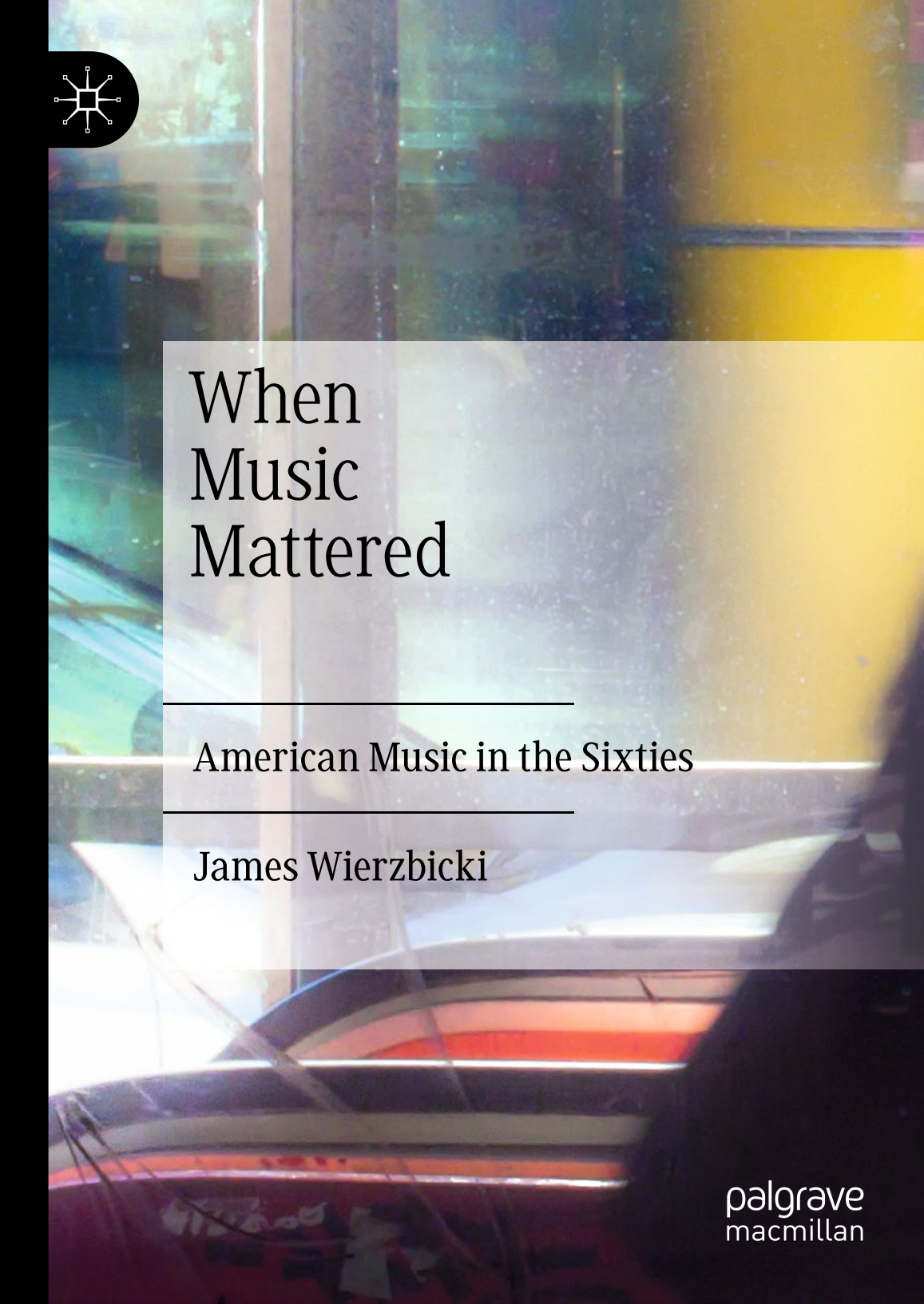

When Music Mattered

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To all those who survived, with their souls intact …

Preface

This is a book about the American Sixties. More specifically, it is a book about the American Sixties as reflected in select forms of the period's music, music that seemed to draw its spark and sparkle directly from the period's heady 'spirit' and which, for the people who consumed it as well as for the people who created it, really, really mattered.

When Music Mattered is certainly not an account of all that happened, music-wise, within the borders of the United States during a time that began during the optimistic days of the Kennedy administration and which ended, the way I see it, with the inglorious pull-out of American troops from Vietnam in 1975. Nor is it an exegesis that attempts to explain how developments within various musical genres led, teleologically, to others. *When Music Mattered* is not—strictly or even loosely speaking—a musicological study, but it is rich, I think, in contextual 'filters' through which scholars focused on music alone might profitably regard their particular objects of interest.

Although the bulk of what is reported within each chapter flows more or less in chronological order, readers in need of clear narrative threads will be disappointed. In a novel whose plot is set in part in the Sixties, Tom Robbins has his narrator describe an account of how one of the characters happened to end up where he did as a "spray of events," something "best called a *spray*," he says, "because events are seldom as linearly linked as those who tout 'history' would prefer to believe."[1] I like that image, and the idea behind it, and I find it to be an attractive literary model.

[1] Tom Robbins, *Villa Incognito* (New York: Bantam, 2003), 100–101. Emphasis original.

The nine chapters of my 2016 study on American music in the Fifties were 'sprays'—of information and insights, of commentaries both contemporaneous with and distant from the music at hand, of concepts and criticisms and tentative conclusions—triggered by different types of music yet fundamentally tied to the book's overriding thesis, that is, that a great deal of what occurred in the United States during the prosperous postwar years was affected in one way or another by anxieties having to do with sexual politics, inter-racial tensions, the Cold War, and, scariest of all, the Arms Race.[2]

This follow-up book is similarly a collection of music-related 'sprays,' all centered on the feeling of urgency that was part and parcel of the American Sixties' socio-political essence. The five main chapters bear the names of familiar musical categories: 'Folk,' 'Rock,' 'Jazz,' 'Avant-Garde,' 'Classical.' But the book's real subject matter—spelled out in the Prologue and then reconsidered in the Epilogue, but spread throughout all that comes between—is the period's tangled mess of hopes and frustrations, of hungers as much for self-identity as for self-indulgence, of crises of conscience that bothered Americans of almost all ages and regardless of political persuasion. Diverse though the touch-points are, they are hardly strung together at random; in terms of logic, I trust that in each chapter, as well as over the course of the entire book, "the trail is rather easy to sniff."[3]

Sprays

My chapter on 'Folk' music begins with a report on the 'beatnik riot' in which a few hundred Greenwich Village folksingers had an altercation with police in April 1961 and ends with a report on Bob Dylan's still-controversial 'electric' performance at the Newport Folk Festival in July 1965. In between accounts of those two landmark events come 'sprays' on the agendas behind America's so-called second folksong revival, on the evolution of the Newport festival, and on the potency of "We Shall Overcome" and other 'protest songs'; arguably more weighty material between the bookending reports includes meditations on how the so-called urban folkniks back then differed from participants in the 'plastic' folk movement, and on why folk music of the decidedly *non*-plastic sort

[2] James Wierzbicki, *Music in the Age of Anxiety: American Music in the Fifties* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016).

[3] Robbins, *Villa Incognito*, 101.

was so appealing to young Americans who throughout the Sixties almost desperately searched for things in which they could believe.

The 'Rock' chapter, the book's longest, starts with thoughts on Dylan at Newport and concludes with gruesome details regarding what occurred five years later at the Altamont Speedway in California. But in this chapter, too, the emphasis is not on the music *per se* of the short-lived Age of Rock but, rather, on that music's motivations. After its opening remarks about the qualities that distinguish rock from rock 'n' roll, the chapter addresses the music's requisite loudness and attitude of defiance toward 'The Man,' its symbiotic relationship with the period's burgeoning drug culture, its sparking of an entirely new form of music journalism, and (perhaps to the consternation of Sixties veterans who foster fond memories of what they themselves listened to as they got ready to go out and protest against this or that) its almost non-existent relationship with the politics of the day.

The chapter on 'Jazz,' likely the book's most confrontational chapter, begins by reminding readers that rock music in the Sixties, despite its obvious roots in black culture, was largely a 'white' thing; to sharpen the point, the opening paragraphs note that the extensive press coverage that flowed in the bloody wake of Altamont barely mentioned that the young man who was killed was an African American. But this is just a prelude to a discussion about how during the Sixties, at least in some circles, crucially important to the very idea of jazz was not only the color of performers' skin but also the perceived color *of the music itself*. At the heart of the chapter is the short-lived style known as 'free jazz.' Preceding this centerpiece are a collection of fictions regarding jazz's 'blackness,' a résumé of the politics of the Black Power movement that to many white Americans in the Sixties seemed so very frightening, and a definition—presented in a way that I hope pricks the consciences of all its readers—of racism; following the bit on 'free jazz' is a digest of the bitterly racist polemics that this music provoked and then a comment on how the only serious audience this music ever attracted was made up for the most part of white intellectuals whose aesthetics were perhaps 'colorblind.' The chapter ends, similar to how the 'Folk' and 'Rock' chapters end, with the observation that 'free jazz' for all intents and purposes disappeared after the fires of the Sixties had burned themselves out.

The chapter titled 'Avant-Garde' ends in rather the same way, and perhaps readers will detect in this a pattern that belies my earlier suggestion that this book is not an interpretive history. In any case, the 'Avant-Garde' chapter begins with an explanation about why that term—ubiquitously

applied to 'adventurous' works of visual and theatrical art since early in the twentieth century—is so slippery, and so ambiguous, when applied to music. Then it plunges into a motley array of hard-to-categorize music that numerous writers over the last several decades have indeed put into the 'avant-garde' pigeonhole. The chapter deals with the music, or the quasi-music, or the music-based activities, of members of the politically charged collective known as Fluxus; it deals with the now officially recognized compositional practice known as Minimalism, which arguably grew out of Fluxus and then took on a life of its own; echoing sections of the book's 'Rock' chapter, it deals with reasons why some of the period's avant-garde music was presented at very high volume levels, and with how some of that music related to the period's prevalent drug culture; it deals with innovations in electronic music that resulted in, on the one hand, the commercially successful Moog synthesizer and, on the other hand, such non-commercial and decidedly experimental 'tape' pieces as Steve Reich's *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*. Again echoing ideas presented earlier in the book, not just in the 'Rock' chapter but also in the 'Folk' chapter, the chapter unpacks motivations for at least some examples of the Sixties' musical avant-garde, and it concludes with a wondering about whatever happened to that music's terrific energy.

A comparable wondering about loss of energy marks the start of the chapter on 'Classical' music, although in this case the wondering is contemporaneous with the music itself. After citing critics who seemed convinced that classical music in the Sixties had lost its 'mojo,' the chapter makes the point that freshly composed classical music in the American Sixties in fact flourished, thanks to an unprecedented—and never to be repeated—amount of funding both private and public. A summary of the period's music-oriented largesse ends with a defense of the foundations' and endowments' overall fair-handedness, necessary because at the time there existed—and there still exists today—the *perception* that the funders and prize-givers were biased toward music of a particular methodological bent. Along with debunking the 'myth' of serial music's dominance in the Sixties, the chapter's central section raises the knotty issue of prestige, and asks why prestige seems to matter most to those who lack it. Descending from that prickly plateau, the chapter winds down first with a report on those several serialists whose 'rebellious' rapprochement with traditional tonality arguably regained for classical music its audience appeal and then critical commentary on those relatively few works of classical music—ranging from Leonard Bernstein's well-known *Mass* to George Rochberg's still

fairly obscure *Music for the Magic Theater*—that actually engaged with some of the Sixties' underlying social and psychological concerns.

Mattering

I realize that I am not the first to combine the adverb 'when' with the noun 'music' and the past tense of the verb 'matter.' Focusing only on folk and rock music, Bruce Pollock in 1984 published a collection of artist profiles titled *When the Music Mattered: Rock in the 1960s*;[4] focusing on a range of music as it played out in a specific locale, Mat Callahan in 2011 contributed a cogent chapter titled "When Music Mattered" to a volume that celebrates the Sixties and post-Sixties life of San Francisco.[5] The prolific (but sometimes repetitive) Richard Taruskin, writing about the life and work of Soviet composer Dmitri Shostakovich, in the first decade of this century published three articles that include "when serious music mattered" in their titles.[6] Minus the adverb, David R. Shumway in the preface to his 2014 book on the idea of the musical pop star noted that by the end of the 1960s some performers were no longer "mere entertainers but politically charged cultural icons," and that as a result "music mattered in a way it never had before";[7] reviewing the history of popular-music studies that decades earlier he had helped launch, Simon Frith in the introduction to a 2007 collection of his writings observed that by the turn of the millennium "what increasingly interested sociological scholars was *how* music mattered to people rather than what sort of music it was."[8]

[4] Bruce Pollock, *When the Music Mattered: Rock in the 1960s* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1984), The book's 2011 second edition, available only in electronic format, has the more accurate title *When the Music Mattered: Portraits from the 1960s.*

[5] Mat Callahan, "When Music Mattered," in *Ten Years that Shook the City: San Francisco 1968–1978*, ed. Chris Carlsson (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2011): 317–28.

[6] Richard Taruskin, "Double Trouble: When Serious Music Mattered," *New Republic* 225, no. 26 (24 December 2001): 26–34; "When Serious Music Mattered: On Shostakovich and Three Recent Books," in *A Shostakovich Casebook*, ed. Malcolm Hamrick Brown (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004): 360–83; and "When Serious Music Mattered," in Taruskin, *On Russian Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009): 299–321.

[7] David R. Shumway, *Rock Star: The Making of Musical Icons from Elvis to Bruce Springsteen* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), xiii.

[8] Simon Frith, *Taking Popular Music Seriously: Selected Essays* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), xi. Emphasis original.

In the American Sixties, certain forms of music really did matter. But the music's 'mattering'—to borrow a word coined by veteran rock journalist Robert Christgau[9]—always had less to do with the music itself than with the sundry forces that prompted it into being or, more important, with the impact it had on listeners not as individuals but as members of a collective.

Bob Dylan's 1962 "Blowin' in the Wind" mattered not at all because its melody and harmonies were 'nice' or because its 1963 cover version by Peter, Paul and Mary was so enormously popular, or because its lyrics (with their mentions of "cannonballs" and "a white dove," and of "roads [that] a man [must] walk down before they call him a man") later, after the protests of the Sixties began in earnest, made it as easily interpretable as an anti-war song as a song in support of the Civil Rights movement; rather, the song *mattered*—and matters still—because it articulates existentialist questions that thinking persons know are important yet unanswerable. Likewise, 'free jazz' *mattered* in the Sixties not because of the extraordinary sounds produced by Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane but because of how, after the non-violent Civil Rights movement yielded to more forceful forms of expression, this musical style was appropriated by black separatists and used for political purposes scarcely imagined by its original practitioners. Likewise, too, serialism mattered in the Sixties not because of the actual content of any specific twelve-tone pieces by Milton Babbitt or Charles Wuorinen, and not even because the idea behind the compositional method more or less jibed with the Space Age's scientistic frame of mind; in the Sixties serialism *mattered*, to a degree that nowadays is hard to fathom, mostly because the 'status' afforded its ideology was so bitterly resented by the very community that bestowed it.

To make the claim, as I do throughout this book, that during the Sixties certain forms of American music 'mattered' in ways that make then stand apart from the norm is not to suggest that other musics, old as well as

[9] In the Introduction to his *Consumer Guide: Albums of the '90s* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2000), Christgau acknowledges that he wrote about 'The Mattering' way back in the Sixties (p. x), but he never explains when or where he first used the term. Scoured though I have the published writings of the prolific Christgau, I have not not able to track it down. Nor, apparently, has Devon Powers, who concludes her impressively detailed book on the early days of rock journalism with a Christgau-focused chapter titled "Mattering." See Devon Powers, *Writing the Record: The Village Voice and the Birth of Rock Criticism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), 123–36; and Devon Powers, "Rock Criticism and Intellectual History at the *Village Voice*, 1955–1972" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 2008).

current, did/do not also 'matter.' Perhaps inspired by classics professor Richard F. Thomas's poetry-focused 2017 *Why Dylan Matters*, but more likely just by coincidence, in 2018 the University of Texas Press launched a series of short monographs devoted to the 'mattering' of various pop music figures,[10] and in 2019 Will Brooker brought out a book-length appreciation titled *Why Bowie Matters*. All of these are enthusiastic celebrations of the artists named in their titles, and in essence they are not much different from the countless homages to artists in all fields that have appeared over the last several centuries. In contrast, my book deals less with artists in particular than with milieus in which artists in general—famous and otherwise—existed. And only rarely do its passages even come close to 'celebrating' anything. *When Music Mattered* deals with an historical period during which certain forms of music indeed seemed to matter a great deal to certain segments of American society, albeit in some cases, it will be shown, the reasons for the music's 'mattering' were far from positive.

Scope

As noted, for me the period we call 'the Sixties' ranges from the early days of the Kennedy administration to America's final exit from Vietnam. But readers should not be surprised to find that the music dealt with in these pages dates largely from a short slice of time that Fredric Jameson, Arthur Marwick, and others describe as the middle period of the 'long' Sixties[11] and that Sarah Hill, in her "brief history of a small neighborhood in San

[10] Started by the University Press of New England and then acquired by the University of Texas Press, the series began in 2018 with Tom Smucker's *Why the Beach Boys Matter* and Donna Gaines's *Why the Ramones Matter*. Similarly titled later volumes in the series deal with Karen Carpenter (Karen Tongson, 2019), Lhasa de Bela (Fred Goodman, 2019), Marianne Faithfull (Tanya Pearson, 2021), Bushwick Bill (Charles L. Hughes, 2021), Solange (Stephanie Phillips, 2021), and the group called Labelle (Adele Bertel, 2021).

[11] See, for example, Fredric Jameson, "Periodizing the 60s," *Social Text* 9–10 (1984): 178–209; Arthur Marwick, "The Cultural Revolution of the Long Sixties: Voices of Reaction, Protest, and Permeation," *The International History Review* 27, no. 4 (2005): 780–806; Alan Hooper, "A Politics Adequate to the Age: The New Left and the Long Sixties," in *New Left, New Right and Beyond: Taking the Sixties Seriously*, ed. Geoff Andrews, Richard Cockett, Alan Hooper, and Michael Williams (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 7–25; and Christopher B. Strain, *The Long Sixties: America, 1955–1973* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 207).

Francisco," unhesitatingly calls "the short 60s,"[12] that is, the six-year period that extends only from 1964 through 1969. The policy makers that David Halberstam sarcastically labeled "the best and the brightest" were at their most confident during the Johnson administration.[13] During these same years, the fringe groups that Susan Sontag called "the fakers, the slobs, and the merely flipped-out" were at their most visible;[14] the protesters were at their loudest, and the activists were, well, at their most active. And it seems that it was during these 'middle' years that the music that prompts this book—especially the music discussed in the three central chapters—was at its most vibrant.

The scope of music covered in this book is similarly, and deliberately, limited. There is no attempt here to be comprehensive; even before I am accused I plead guilty to the charge of 'cherry picking.' Much of the commercial music that likely comes immediately to mind when one hears mention of 'the Sixties' is addressed only for the sake of putting things into perspective; beyond this current sentence, there is scarcely a word here about Motown or country/bluegrass or salsa or soul or funk or proto-disco or jazz-fusion or surf-rock. Music of that and many another sort of course resonated throughout the Sixties, and for veterans of the era it perhaps figures importantly in the soundtracks of our remembered younger lives. All that notwithstanding, when measured against this book's broadly cultural main themes, most of it is quite beside the point.

Just as the scope of music treated here is limited, also limited is the scope of the book's characters, and the amount of 'data' that tells precisely who did what and where and when. The simple facts of American music in the Sixties—especially Sixties folk and rock music—are easily available elsewhere. To the compilers of these facts I obviously owe much, but my

[12] Sarah Hill, *San Francisco and the Long 60s* (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2016), xiii, 9.

[13] David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (New York: Random House, 1972). Regarding the phrase, Michael Schudson writes: "In fact, the title of Halberstam's famous book on the making of American policy in the Vietnam war refers not to the experts on Vietnam, notably the old hands at the State Department, but to the cocky aristocrats in the Kennedy administration who ignored them, for example, Averill Harriman and McGeorge Bundy, the people who claimed authority not on the basis of mastering a body of knowledge, but on the basis of their circulation among and command over powerful men." Michael Schudson, "The 'Lippmann-Dewey Debate' and the Invention of Walter Lippman as an Anti-Democrat 1986–1996," *International Journal of Communication* 2 (2008), 1035.

[14] Susan Sontag, "What's Happening in America," in *Styles of Radical Will* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969), 201. The essay dates from 1966.

method has been to consider the reported facts and then look around them, to probe beneath them, to make full use of the first four of journalism's famous 'Ws' and then focus on the 'Why' of it all. After all, the emphasis here is *not* on musical personalities or on musical products; the emphasis is on extra-musical pressures that in effect squeezed certain types of music into existence. In *Music in the Age of Anxiety* I examined a number of musical genres whose exemplars were symptoms of, or responses to, the pervasive worries of the Fifties; in *When Music Mattered* I explore music from the Sixties that, at least to some Americans, seemed "as serious as your life."[15]

Coober Pedy, SA, Australia James Wierzbicki

[15] The phrase, which Val Wilmer uses not just in the title but also in the very last paragraph of her 1977 book on 'free jazz,' comes from a conversation she had with pianist McCoy Tyner. Speaking about the dedication that went into music of the sort that he and saxophonist John Coltrane typically made, Tyner said to Wilmer: "The general public, I feel, are swayed by a lot of different things. They're persuaded by a lot of different elements around musicians without really understanding what music is supposed to mean. It's a personal thing, it has a lot of meaning. Music's not a plaything—*it's as serious as your life.*" McCoy Tyner, quoted in Val Wilmer, *As Serious as Your Life: Black Music and the Free Jazz Revolution, 1957–1977* (London: Allison & Busby, 1977), 351. Emphasis original.

Prologue: The Sixties

Music mattered during the American Sixties. But back then almost everything mattered, because back then almost everything had to do—for better or worse, depending upon one's point of view—with sweeping shifts in attitude toward life in general.

Conservatives shuddered at the very thought of it, but for others the shifts were long overdue. Indeed, for a large portion of the American population, the period we call the Sixties was a time "when everybody thought that they were changing the world, that [they] *could* change the world."[1] For young adults, especially, the entire period had "the quality of a giant experiment in the mutability of the human condition"; it was an epic contest, to borrow Robert Danton's characterization of the French Revolution, of 'possibili[ty] against the givenness of things.'"[2] It was "a searing and incandescent time,"[3] a time that "crackled with romantic intensity" and "a feeling that 'participatory democracy' would make America true to its large promises,"[4] a time when even "corporate leaders … honestly believed they were elevating American society to a new

[1] Jim Haynes, *Thanks for Coming: An Autobiography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 174. Emphasis added.

[2] Jeremy Varon, Michael S. Foley, and John McMillan, "Time Is an Ocean: The Past and Future of the Sixties," *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics and Culture* 1, no. 1 (June 2008), 1. The Danton quote is from Marvin R. Cox, *The Place of the French Revolution in History* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 195.

[3] Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam, 1987), xiv.

[4] Sanford Pinsker, "The Sixties I Remember, and Continue to Struggle With," *Academic Questions* 10, no. 4 (1997), 12.

level of humanity and excellence."[5] During the Sixties, attested one of the period's best-known chroniclers, "you could strike sparks anywhere," and "there was a fantastic universal sense that whatever we were doing was *right*."[6]

Early in the Sixties, many Americans genuinely looked forward to crossing what the future president John F. Kennedy called "a new frontier," beyond which were "uncharted areas of science and space, unsolved problems of peace and war, unconquered problems of ignorance and prejudice, unanswered questions of poverty and surplus."[7] They were willing and ready—even eager—to accept Kennedy's invitation to join in a global effort to "explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths, and encourage the arts and commerce."[8] Even after Kennedy's assassination in November 1963, many Americans still shared in the belief of his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, that "in our time we have the opportunity to move not just toward the rich society or the powerful society but toward the great society," a society that "rests on abundance and liberty for all," one that "demands an end to poverty and racial injustice," one in which "men are more concerned with the quality of their goals than the quantity of their goods."[9]

But perhaps the New Frontier, like the proverbial carrot before the horse, was never more than a temptation. Perhaps the Great Society, despite the Johnson administration's noble efforts to enact legislation toward its creation, was only a dream, something that felt truly wonderful for as long as one indulged in it but in fact was something just too good to be true.

The Sixties was indeed "a promising time," W.J. Rorabaugh tells us, but it "was 'promising' in two distinct ways." On the one hand, the period's early years fairly glowed with the widespread conviction that the essence of American life, after the dark days of the prosperous yet repressive Fifties, was finally going to improve. On the other hand, the period

[5] Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture*, "Introduction" to the new edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), xxiii.

[6] Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas: A Savage Journey to the Heart of the American Dream* (London: Paladin, 1972), 68. Emphasis original.

[7] John F. Kennedy, acceptance speech upon winning the Democrat Party's nomination for the presidency, Los Angeles, 15 July 1960.

[8] John F. Kennedy, inaugural address, Washington, DC, 20 January 1961.

[9] Lyndon B. Johnson, commencement address at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 22 May 1964.

was increasingly bothered by frustration triggered by the realization that much of what politicians predicted was just never going to happen. "Americans sought more than could be obtained," Rorabaugh writes; they were "hooked on hope," and this presented problems:

> Far too often, plans that were proposed in the Sixties bore little relationship to goals that could actually be accomplished. In this "promising" time an aura of unreality sometimes prevailed, and the political, social, and cultural atmosphere too often bordered on euphoria. Not only was the increasing affluence of the Fifties projected forward on a rising trajectory that admitted no possibility of a future slowdown, but the can-do spirit and exuberance with which America addressed all problems did not bode well when an issue arose, such as Vietnam, that called for a discerning eye to tell the difference between a situation that might be ameliorated and a difficulty that could not be solved.[10]

Vietnam, shorthand for America's escalating involvement in what at first had been euphemistically called a mere 'conflict' in Southeast Asia, was but one of the difficulties that throughout the Sixties seemed unsolvable. Another apparently unsolvable difficulty had to do with the increasing friction between black and white America; despite the sustained efforts and the always peaceful motives of the 'official' Civil Rights movement, by 1964—just around the time when the sentiment of the American public was starting to turn *against* the military build-up in Vietnam—race relations in some cities had grown so tense that riots erupted, and not long afterward members of African-American urban communities, tired of the seemingly impotent idea of passive resistance, for the sake of self-protection formed armed militias. Still another difficulty had to do with the student-led Free Speech movement that began in 1964 at the University of California and by the end of the decade resulted in the closing down of campuses all across the country.[11]

The Sixties also witnessed the beginnings of what would soon be labeled, usually in a derogatory way, Women's Lib[eration], and the drive

[10] W.J. Rorabaugh, *Kennedy and the Promise of the Sixties* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), x–xi.

[11] For a range of perspectives of the Free Speech movement and its long-lasting effects on American university culture, see the essays contained in *The Free Speech Movement: Reflections on Berkeley in the 1960s*, ed. Robert Cohen and Reginald E. Zelnick (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

for equal rights for gay Americans. A polite protest outside the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City in September 1968 featured women tossing brassieres and girdles into a trash barrel and singing, in rehearsed three-part harmony, *contrafacta* along the lines of "Ain't she sweet, / makin' profits off her meat?";[12] the next summer's so-called Stonewall Rebellion, a six-day fracas that took place after police shut down one of the more popular gay bars in lower Manhattan's West Village, involved the bar's clientele pelting the police first with insults and then with beer bottles, and occasionally bursting out in chorus-line renditions of a song that began with the words: "We are the Stonewall girls. / We wear our hair in curls. / We wear no underwear. / We show our pubic hair."[13]

[12] Charlotte Curtiss, "Miss America Pageant Is Picketed by 100 Women," *New York Times*, 8 September 1968, B1.

"Ain't She Sweet," with music by Milton Ager and lyrics by Jack Yellin, had been a pop 'standard' since 1927; the Beatles included it in their early pub repertoire, but their recording of it—a single paired with their cover of Hank Snow's "Nobody's Child"—was released in the United States until 1964. The parodic lyrics to "Ain't She Sweet" and other familiar songs were penned for the most part by Robin Morgan; their original typescripts are housed at the library of Duke University and are available on-line at https://dukelibraries.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15957coll6/id/91.

For details on the protest, see, for example, Paul D. Buchanan, *Radical Feminists: A Guide to an American Subculture* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press, 2011), 50–51; Georgia Paige Welch, "'Up Against the Wall Miss America': Women's Liberation and Miss Black America in Atlantic City, 1968," *Feminist Formations* 27, no. 2 (2015): 70–97; and Robert C. Cottrell and Blaine T. Browne, *1968: The Rise and Fall of the New American Revolution* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 206–209.

[13] The ditty, which by this time had become something of a comic anthem among the men who frequented the gay bars on Christopher Street, was sung to the tune of the theme song of *The Howdy Doody Show*, a children's program that had run on NBC television from 1947 to 1960. It is the same melody that since the 1890s belonged to the song known as "Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay." David Carter, *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution* (New York: Macmillan, 2004), 176.

Reportage on Stonewall in the mainstream press ("4 Policemen Hurt in 'Village' Raid: Melee Near Sheridan Square Follows Action at Bar," *New York Times*, 29 June 1969, 33; "Police Again Rout 'Village' Youths: Outbreak by 400 Follows a Near-Riot Over Raid," *New York Times*, 30 June 1969, 22) indeed mentioned the fact that the Stonewall Inn was frequented by homosexuals, but the deeply buried stories focused on the disturbances that followed the raid, which police said had nothing at all to do with the sexual proclivities of the Stonewall's clientele but only with the alleged fact that the Mafia-run establishment was in violation of certain liquor laws.

A front-page article in *The Village Voice*, on the other hand, focused both on the event's unprecedented demonstration of what soon came to be known as "gay power" and on what to the article's author seemed to be, importantly, "a new and open brand of exhibitionism"

What happened on the Atlantic City boardwalk and on the streets in front of the Stonewall Inn in the long run proved to be momentous, but it received little media attention, and it was easily eclipsed by explosive evidence of other Sixties 'difficulties.' At the time of the Miss America and Stonewall events Americans of all political/moral persuasions, and of all ages, would have had fresh in their memories the experience of night after night watching *live* television coverage of, for example, the inner-city chaos that constituted 1967s "long, hot summer"[14] and the demonstrations against the war in Vietnam that in August 1968 triggered a 'police riot' outside the Democratic party's convention in Chicago. There is no denying the earnestness of the Miss America and Stonewall protestors, or the ongoing importance of their actions. But in themselves those actions, in comparison with what was going on all around them, seem almost like child's play.

Adolescents

What for all intents and purposes *did* amount to child's play, even though most of its participants were legally adults, were manifestations of the counterculture that had to do not at all with socio-political issues but only with escapist self-indulgence.

It should be remembered that the Sixties was a period during which *half* of the American populace—more or less—fell into that nebulous category of humanness to which modern psychologists affix the label 'adolescence.' Cultural historian Hayden White tells us that between 1960 and 1969 American adolescents numbered approximately "70 million persons

(Lucian Truscott IV, "Gay Power Comes to Sheridan Square," *The Village Voice*, 3 July 1969, 18).

[14] The term 'long, hot summer' had been used as early as 1963 by African-American journalist Louis Lomax to describe what Lomax foresaw as race-related protests in New York and Chicago; in 1967 the term became ubiquitous in discussions of civil disturbances that erupted spectacularly in Newark and Detroit, triggered, respectively, by the arrest of a black cab driver for a traffic violation and a confrontation between mostly white police officers and mostly black patrons outside an unlicensed bar. The so-called race riots in Newark and Detroit were the most destructive and the most media-covered, but over the course of June and July 1967 comparable disturbances took place in Boston, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Tampa, Toledo, and many other cities. For a history of the term, and a full account of what happened in Detroit and elsewhere, see Malcolm McLaughlin, *The Long, Hot Summer of 1967: Urban Rebellion in America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), vii–xi and 1–20.

out of a total population that increased from 123 million to around 193 million."[15] Without the "sheer *quantity* of persons … believed to have been undergoing [the] process known as 'adolescence,'" White suggests, the Sixties as we know it simply never would have occurred:

> The period might have been just as raucous, contentious, contested, and so on, but it would not have been whatever it is that we think the Sixties to have been. You cannot think away these 70 million youths and their condition of adolescence without changing our notion of the possibilities of what actually happened during the decade that carries the nick—or proper—name of "the Sixties."[16]

Although White at first identifies adolescents simply as persons between the ages of twelve and twenty-one, a few paragraphs later he more qualitatively describes 'adolescence' as "the experience of young persons 'on hold' on the way from puberty to adulthood in a modern urban setting."[17] Perhaps to sharpen his point that adolescence had less to do with age than state of mind, in a footnote he includes a comment from the World Health Organization to the effect that "adolescents are different both from young children and adults [most specifically in that they] are not fully capable of understanding complex concepts, or the relationship between behavior and consequences, or the degree of control they have or can have" vis-à-vis various potentially 'difficult' situations.[18] In another footnote, White quotes from a 2005 article about recent neuropsychological research on those "areas of the brain where impulsivity, risk taking, and poor social judgment are regulated"; this research, the article says, shows that "teen brains remain immature through early adulthood," and that adolescent brains, because they are not fully developed, "do not achieve critical mechanisms of impulsivity and behavioral control until perhaps age 20 or beyond."[19]

[15] Hayden White, "The Substance of the Sixties,' in *Revisiting the Sixties: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on America's Longest Decade*, ed. Laura Bieger and Christian Lammert (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2013), 14.

[16] Ibid., 13–14. Emphasis original.

[17] Ibid., 14.

[18] Ibid., 13–14, note 3. White does not give the source of the quoted material from the World Health Organization.

[19] Ibid., 14, note 4. The quoted material is from Jeffrey Fagan, "Adolescents, Maturity and the Law," *The American Prospect* 16 (2005).

The implication here is that much of what happened in America during the Sixties happened because its enactors—regardless of their chronological ages—were somehow in the throes of adolescence. Political commentators of a conservative bent remain of the opinion that the Sixties was a period of "moral decay,"[20] an unfortunately 'long' decade that amounted to "an explosion of puerile irresponsibility," an episode in American history whose "fashionable rebellion" served, alas, as the "wellspring of today's ubiquitous identity politics, debased high culture, sexual permissiveness, and censorious political correctness."[21]

But references to adolescent behavior have also been made by commentators from the other side of the political fence, commentators who include not just historians who regard the period sympathetically but also participants in Sixties movements who wistfully remember the 'good old days.'

Summarizing virtually all that the Sixties wrought, Roger Kimball writes: "If America's cultural revolution was anything, it was an attack on maturity; more, it was a glorification of youth, of *im*maturity."[22] Remarking from a British perspective that nevertheless in most ways applies to America, Jenny Diski reminds veterans of the period that "our parents … had more to do with dreaming up and even sustaining the Sixties than we think," and that the pervasive Sixties 'attitude' was triggered most of all by "a nagging urge to rebel against" parental values;[23] similarly, Paul Berman notes that although most participants in Sixties movements were fully aware that their parents had survived both the Great Depression and World War II, they themselves "grew up in the greatest prolonged boom in the history of capitalism" and for the most part led protected "childish lives."[24] Near the end of his 1998 tome on the 'cultural revolution' that affected Europe as well as America, Arthur Marwick unashamedly admits:

> Much of what was done in the Sixties was downright stupid …. [T]here was much pointless violence in pursuit of a revolution that was never there to be grasped. Faith in drugs as the key to a better society was mindless,

[20] Eleanor Townsley, "'The Sixties' Trope," *Theory, Culture & Society* 18, no. 6 (2001), 99.

[21] Bruce Bawer, "The Other Sixties," *Wilson Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (Spring 2004), 64.

[22] Roger Kimball, *The Long March: How the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s Changed America* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000), 9. Emphasis added.

[23] Jenny Diski, *The Sixties* (London: Profile Books, 2009), 2, 5.

[24] Paul Berman, *A Tale of Two Utopias: The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 31.

> self-deluding, and destructive; many other counter-cultural activities owed far more to self-indulgence than to serious protest against established ways of doing things.[25]

More touching, because its conclusions are so laden with remorse, is a memoir in which former activist Peter Collier compares the Sixties with an earlier period of political unrest:

> In the Thirties, the era against which we always measure our own, the main actors were at least adults—embracing adult evil and, in some cases at least, making adult atonement. The Sixties was a decade of adolescence filled with lost boys and girls who never grew up politically and have thus ignored the promptings of history to take stock of the consequences of their acts.[26]

There still exists, of course, a great deal of "retrospective affection" for the Sixties. After all, Collier recalls, the Sixties "was a time, perhaps the last time, when talk was cheap and life was fun. It was the last time when it was possible to be innocent." By the end of the decade, however, the innocence was almost invariably acknowledged with "a knowing smile" that came from "confirmed cynics and connoisseurs of chaos." Perhaps writing with tears in his eyes, Collier describes the situation with references to culture both high and low:

> What we called politics in the Sixties was exactly what Lewis Feuer and many of our other political elders tried to say it was before we shouted them down—an Oedipal revolt on a grand scale; a no-fault acting out. We like to think of ourselves as characters out of Malraux. As I think back on it now, however, it seems to me that we were always political Katzenjammer kids whose American Mischief turned into American Mayhem without missing a beat.
>
> The Sixties was a time that existed in the eye of history as few other times have, yet for all this its years were oddly ahistorical. There were great events—a cataclysmic war, assassination and fratricidal strife, the disaffection of an entire generation—yet the time itself has none of the perverse grandeur Arthur Koestler and others managed to salvage from the Thirties. This

[25] Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958–1974* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 803.

[26] Peter Collier, "Something Happened to Me Yesterday," in Peter Collier and David Horowitz, *Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts about the '60s* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 278.

is why the decade plays less authentically in the chambers of memory as tragedy than as melodrama and farce.[27]

A glorification of immaturity and an Oedipal revolt on a grand scale, a counterculture whose activities owed mostly to self-indulgence, a collection of dramas remembered nowadays not as tragedy but as farce, a playground on which privileged young persons who led childish lives rebelled against hard-won parental values—these are harsh indictments of a period that many historians still regard as being "essentially a noble era of reform"[28] for the United States and arguably the "most powerfully transformative"[29] decade experienced not just by America but by the entire world. The indictments seem especially harsh coming as they do not from persons who for ideological reasons have long been opposed to everything the Sixties stand for but from individuals who at the time were more or less 'into' all the promises that the Sixties seemed to offer. These individuals, of course, are no longer the young men and women they once were; rather, they are middle-aged or even elderly adults reflecting back, perhaps nostalgically, but also perhaps apologetically, on their once-upon-a-time adolescent behavior.

* * *

G. Stanley Hall, the pioneering American psychoanalyst who helped popularize both the term and the concept with his 1904–1907 two-volume *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education*, suggested that in some individuals adolescence could easily last until age twenty-five or thirty. Surely the prolongation of adolescence was easier in the Sixties than it had been in previous decades. During the American Sixties, after all, "the universities boomed even faster than the college-age population."[30] The enormity of this 'boom' should not be underestimated. "By the end of the 1960s," writes historian and Sixties veteran Terry H. Anderson, "almost *half* of all kids between 18 and 21 were attending college. Enrollments

[27] Ibid.

[28] Edward P. Morgan, *The 60s Experience: Hard Lessons about Modern America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 7.

[29] Varon et al., "Time Is an Ocean," 1.

[30] Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 21.

soared. In 1960 there were three million college students, but in autumn 1964 the first baby boomers hit campus and by the next year there were five million and that doubled to ten million by 1973."[31] And with this "surge in the student population," naturally, there came "increased protest opportunities."[32]

If adolescents of the prosperous Fifties tended to be "withdrawn, cautious, unimaginative, indifferent, unadventurous—and silent,"[33] adolescents of the equally prosperous Sixties were for the most part outspoken and loud; whereas the adolescent of the Fifties was typically a loner and sometimes a 'rebel without a cause,' the campus-based adolescent in the Sixties always had plenty of company, and plenty of causes from which to choose. These causes ranged from the righteous to the raunchy, from the moral heights of the anti-war and Civil Rights movements to the self-indulgent cesspits of the drugs and sex scenes. For individuals, commitments to the various causes often overlapped, and often they were short-lived. As long as they lasted, though, the episodes of torch-bearing tended to be wholehearted. When one considers the intensity with which so many adolescents during the Sixties took up one cause or another, it is worth noting that Hall early in the twentieth century presciently "placed considerable emphasis on adolescence as that period of life when religious conversion was most likely to be expected."[34]

Beat Roots

In 1951, when he published *The True Believer*, longshoreman-turned-philosopher Eric Hoffer could hardly have imagined an America swamped with images of free-wheeling young persons that the media—sometimes affectionately, sometimes derisively—called 'hippies.' Nor could Hoffer have envisioned the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) and their Underground Weathermen radical wing, or the Black Panthers or the Women's Libbers or the New Left, or the various collectives informally

[31] Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in America from Greensboro to Wounded Knee* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 95. Emphasis added.

[32] Tor Egil Førland, "Cutting the Sixties Down to Size: Conceptualizing, Historicizing, Explaining," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 9, no. 2 (Fall 2015), 127.

[33] William Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America, 1932–1972* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1974) 576.

[34] Winthrop D. Jordan, "Searching for Adulthood in America," *Dædalus* 105, no. 4 (1976), 7.

known as draft dodgers, folkniks, tree-huggers, freaks, and acid heads. But doubtless he was aware, since he was living in San Francisco, of the societal sub-group that although it did not win a nickname until 1958 had nonetheless been 'officially' identified as early as 1952.[35] And probably Hoffer noticed, as he looked over the initial reviews of a book that would soon become a favorite of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, that America's emerging 'beat' culture had at least a few things in common with the history-changing mass movements that were the subject of his historical study.

"All mass movements generate in their adherents a readiness to die and a proclivity for united action," Hoffer wrote in his preface. "All of them, irrespective of the doctrine they preach and the program they project, breed fanaticism, enthusiasm, fervent hope, hatred and intolerance; all of them are capable of releasing a powerful flow of activity in certain departments of life; all of them demand blind faith and singlehearted allegiance."[36]

Members of the 'beat generation' were hardly numerous enough to form a mass movement, and no evidence suggests that they demonstrated a readiness to die or a proclivity for united action of any sort. Yet there is no denying that the poets and novelists among them emitted a potent flow of creative energy. There is likewise no denying that the 'beat' culture, although it demanded neither faith nor allegiance, was attractive to persons of the sort that, in Hoffer's view, were prime candidates for true-believer status. Most of the young Americans drawn to the 'beat' culture were financially self-supporting, and many of the males among them in fact had seen military service in World War II or, more recently, the Korean War. Yet there was something about them that was not quite fully developed, something that, in a postwar period proclaimed as much by the government as by Madison Avenue to be the equivalent of heaven on

[35] Although supposedly articulated as early as 1948 in private conversation between the novelists Jack Kerouac and John Clellon Holmes, the term 'beat generation' entered the mainstream vocabulary only when the *New York Times Magazine* published an article by Holmes titled "This Is the Beat Generation" (16 November 1952, SM10). The term 'beatnik' was coined in 1958 by *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen. who—playing on the suffix attached to the name of the first-ever man-made earth-orbiting satellite that the Soviet Union had launched the year before—suggested that members of the 'beat generation' were, like the satellite, 'far out.' Herb Caen, "Bagdad-by-the-Bay," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 2 April 1958, 11. Quoted in Tom Dalzell, *Flappers 2 Rappers: American Youth Slang* (Springfield: Merriam-Webster, 1996), 91.

[36] Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (New York: HarperCollins, 1951), xi.

earth, was not quite right. In what was supposedly a time of peace and prosperity, they were "at war with the present" that they felt they had helped create;[37] instead of celebrating their good fortune, as the media suggested they do, they felt guilt-ridden and worn out, and instead of a "desire for self-advancement" they harbored only a "passion for self-renunciation."[38]

To isolated individuals who "crave[d] to be rid of an unwanted self,"[39] the 'beat' culture offered an antidote for what its champions regarded as the American Fifties' "collective failure of nerve"[40] and pandemic "psychic strain."[41] To be sure, some jumped on the bandwagon only for superficial reasons, but that was not until late in the 1950s, after popular culture—in the form of magazine photo essays and, especially, movies—created the stereotypical beatnik.[42] Earlier in the decade, before beards and berets had become symbols of fashionable non-conformity, the appeal of 'beat' culture had less to do with appearances than with values.

These values typically go unremarked upon today, likely because the enduring image of beatniks, when it is not comical or tawdry, is that of "social leper[s],"[43] of "exhibitionistic … unkempt, often unwashed,

[37] Ibid., 72.

[38] Ibid., 12.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Norman Mailer, "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster," *Dissent* 4, no. 3 (1957), 276.

[41] Michael McClure, "Painting Beat by Numbers," in *The Rolling Stone Book of the Beats: The Beat Generation and American Culture*, ed. Holly George-Warren (New York: Hyperion, 1999), 34.

[42] Hollywood films that depicted participants in the 'beat' culture as criminals included *The Beat Generation* (1959), *The Rebel Set* (1959), *The Bloody Brood* (1959), *A Bucket of Blood* (1959), and *The Beatniks* (1960); light-weight portrayals of beatniks figured in the films *Funny Face* (1957) and *The Rat Race* (1959), a 1959 Broadway musical titled *The Nervous Set*, the comic strips *Popeye* and *Nancy*, and—perhaps most famously—the 1959–63 CBS television series *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*.

Time magazine ran articles titled "Beat Mystics" and "The Blazing & the Beat" in its 3 February 1958 and 24 February 1958 issues; *Playboy* magazine published three articles collectively titled "The Beat Mystique" in February 1958; focusing on a de facto 'family' of four beatniks, *Look* magazine published its richly illustrated five-page spread "San Francisco's Bohemians: Bored, Bearded, Beat—Wally Berman, Shirley Berman, Linda Cherney, Eric Nord" in its 19 August 1958 issue; *Life* magazine published a similarly illustrative article titled "Squaresville U.S.A. vs. Beatsville" in its 21 September 1959 issue.

[43] Hunter S. Thompson, "When the Beatniks Were Social Lions," in *The Rolling Stone Book of the Beats: The Beat Generation and American Culture*, ed. Holly George-Warren (New

self-styled poets and philosophers … who could be counted on [at public events] to leap to their feet and growl obscene dispraise of the status quo."[44] In fact, many of the values expressed by the original Beats were not at all negative.

Writing almost a half-century after he gained notoriety for the obscenity trial triggered by the publication of his poem "Howl," Allen Ginsberg in 1996 reflected on the "essential ideals" and "main themes that [ran] through the art and poetry and prose" associated with the 'beat' culture of the late 1940s and early 1950s. First and foremost among them, Ginsberg wrote, was "an inquisitiveness into the nature of consciousness, leading to acquaintance with Eastern thought, meditation practice, art as extension or manifestation of exploration or the texture of consciousness, spiritual liberation as a result." This led toward "sexual liberation, particularly gay liberation, which historically had a part in catalyzing women's lib and black lib." And from this there developed "a tolerant nontheistic view" that "explore[d] the texture of consciousness, thus cosmic antifascism, a peaceable nonviolent approach to politics, multiculturalism, the absorption of black culture into mainstream literature and music."[45]

Those same lofty ideals flowed through the Sixties, and it is tempting to think that to some extent they had been directly handed down. After all, the Sixties' most iconic examples of folk, rock, jazz, and avant-garde music were born in precisely the two cities—San Francisco and New York—that during the earlier period had been hotbeds of 'beat' activity, and it is difficult to imagine that at these cities' coffeehouses veteran representatives of the waning 'beat' culture did not come into contact with novices in the waxing Sixties counterculture.[46] But it seems likely that the ideals Ginsberg

York: Hyperion, 1999), 346. Thompson's article was originally published in *The National Review* on 20 April 1964.

[44] Arthur Gelb, "Voice of the Beatnik Is Being Stilled in the 'Village,'" *New York Times*, 20 October 1960, 44.

[45] Allen Ginsberg, Foreword to *The Beat Book: Writings from the Beat Generation*, ed. Anne Waldman (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1996), xv–xvii.

[46] One need not speculate on this, for many autobiographies and collections of letters document the coming into contact of older members of the 'beat' culture with younger representatives of the Sixties counterculture. See, for example, Diane di Prima's *Memoirs of a Beatnik* (New York and London: Penguin, 1998); Willie Nelson's *Willie: An Autobiography* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000); Patti Smith's 2010 *Just Kids* (London: Bloomsbury); Jack Kerouac's *Jack Kerouac: Selected Letters 1957–1969*, ed. Ann Charters (New York: Viking, 1999); and Charles Mingus's *Beneath the Underdog: His World as Composed by Mingus* (New York: Viking, 1991).

cited would have surfaced in the Sixties even if 'beat' culture had never existed. A hunger for self-awareness, a breaking down of pre-existing racial/ethnic barriers and the championing of rights for oppressed minorities, a sense of spirituality that transcended traditional Western religions, a genuine desire for peace and understanding—these were natural by-products of America's postwar state of mind, and the 'beat' writers certainly did not have a monopoly on them.

For ideals of this sort, the adolescents of the Sixties—regardless of their actual ages—formed an audience much vaster than even the most popular of the 'beat' writers ever enjoyed. Their time for protest would come soon enough, but at the cusp of the Fifties and the Sixties, when it seemed that America's "Age of Anxiety"[47] was at last coming to an end, their mood was almost celebratory. This is not to say that they were any more content with the status quo than had been their forebears; what was different was their *attitude* toward the status quo. As their descriptive moniker suggests, the original Beats were just sick and tired of postwar America; they were resigned to the idea that nothing would ever change, so they opted to live their lives as they saw fit, no matter what anyone else thought. In marked contrast, the new generation of adolescents was convinced that, with the election of Kennedy, America's situation was surely going to improve; like religious zealots, they believed—and sometimes preached—that just beyond the horizon was a blissfully rosy future.

[47] The phrase most likely originated with the title of W.H. Auden's book-length prose poem, *The Age of Anxiety: A Baroque Eclogue*, which reflects from the perspective of 1946 on how Western society had changed since the start of World War I. But the phrase has often been used to describe the American situation—plagued by fears of a take-over by communists or, worse, nuclear annihilation—that followed World War II. I used the phrase in the title of my 2016 *Music in the Age of Anxiety: American Music in the Fifties* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), but this was hardly an original idea. A quick survey of the literature reveals writings that range from Haynes Johnson's 2005 *The Age of Anxiety: McCarthyism to Terrorism* (New York: Harcourt) to K.A. Cuordileone's 2000 "Politics in an Age of Anxiety: Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949–1960" (*The Journal of American History* 87, no. 2) and Jessica Wang's 1999 *American Science in an Age of Anxiety: Scientists, Anticommunism & the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press). Significantly, the British-American philosopher Alan Watts used the phrase as early as 1951 in the title of his *The Wisdom of Insecurity: A Message for an Age of Anxiety* (New York: Pantheon).

Mixed Messages

To the extreme, the Sixties were photogenic. Granted, there is not much to look at in pictures of the office-bound men and women who worked hard to realize reforms in public school education and assistance to the poor, advances in civil rights and funding for the arts, and a great many other things that ranked high on the agenda of proponents of the Great Society. But the activities of those who felt that the legislative reforms were not enough, and of those who objected to America's ever-deepening immersion in the Vietnam quagmire, and of those who reveled in an unprecedented relaxation of restrictions on lifestyles—these amounted to dreams come true for photojournalists and their editors.

Commercially published albums of images from the Sixties abound.[48] Even though they are most often portrayed in black and white, the characters who dominate these images are at least in the metaphoric sense colorful, and often their situations are dramatic, so thumbing through the collections makes for an experience that is in some ways exhilarating. At the same time, a browse through the albums can be unsettling. Although these eye-catching images share a common theme of commitment on the part of their subjects, they feature so wide a contrast in affect that it is almost hard to believe they date from the same limited period in American history.

The Sixties celebrated self-expression, yet most of what happened in America during the Sixties resulted from some sort of 'movement,' and thus most of the photos feature not individuals but groups. In some of them, members of a group dance blithely with flowers in their hair, or sit half-naked in puddles of mud while listening to music, sporting signs and symbols that proclaim 'love' and 'peace' but by and large just enjoying themselves. In others, the collective is not at all happy. Memorable photos depict more or less peaceful protests, in which platoons of armed Black Panthers parade in berets and black leather jackets, or in which young men both dapper and scruffy burn their draft cards as a gesture of opposition

[48] See, for example, James Lescott, *The Sixties in Pictures* (New York: Random House, 1999); Nigel Gross, *1960s* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999); Robert Altman and Ben Fong-Torres, *The Sixties* (Santa Monica: Santa Monica Press, 2007); Gerry Kopelow, *All Our Changes: Images from the Sixties Generation* (Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2009); Kelly Knauer, *Visions of the '60s: The Images that Define the Decade* (New York: Time, 2010); and John Rockwell, ed., *Times of the Sixties: The Culture, Politics, and Personalities that Shaped the Decade* (New York: New York Times, 2014).

to the Vietnam War in particular and to the idea of conscription in general, or in which women of all ages demonstrate their frustration with gender-based inequality by tossing their restrictive undergarments into trash barrels. But memorable photos from the Sixties also depict protests that were the very opposite of peaceful. One sees in them large numbers of hitherto organized persons, having had their rightful say regarding voting rights in the southern states or the war in Vietnam, fleeing, as though their lives depended on it, from dogs and tear gas and batons wielded by law enforcement officers charged with 'keeping order.'[49] One sees in them, too, large numbers of persons who were never organized at all, persons who had in common only the strong feeling that they were being somehow oppressed, and who were so pushed to the limit that they spontaneously set their own neighborhoods alight.[50]

It is ironic that America's "long, hot summer" was also, according to the promoters of hippie-oriented events in San Francisco, the "Summer of Love."[51] But irony was par for the Sixties' course. The period that "had begun optimistically and in sharp contrast to the conformist and apathetic

[49] During the Sixties there were many violent confrontations between demonstrators and law enforcement officers, but most infamous among them are the 'Bloody Sunday' melee that took place in Selma, Alabama, on 7 March 1965 during a march led by Martin Luther King, Jr., in support of African Americans' voting rights and the so-called police riot that transpired in Chicago in late August 1968 outside the Democratic Party's national convention. For graphic details on the former, see Barbara Harris Combs, *From Selma to Montgomery: The Long March to Freedom* (New York and London: Routledge, 2014), 35–40; for details on the latter, see Mark Hamilton Lytle, *America's Uncivil Wars: The Sixties Era from Elvis to the Fall of Richard Nixon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 344–47.

[50] In August 1965, after an African-American motorist was pulled over for reckless driving, the Los Angeles area known as Watts experienced an uprising that left thirty-four persons dead; in April 1968, following the assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., disturbances took place in the African-American districts of more than 125 American cities.

These outbreaks of violence prompted immediate explanatory commentary not just in the popular press but also in academic journals. For more distanced opinions, see, for example, Manus I. Midlarsky, "Analyzing Diffusion and Contagion Effects: The Urban Disorders of the 1960s," *American Political Science Review* 72, no. 3 (1978): 996–1008; Albert Bergesen, "Race Riots of 1967: An Analysis of Police Violence in Detroit and Newark," *Journal of Black Studies* 12, no. 3 (1982): 261–74; Gerald Horne, *Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995); and Andrea A. Burns, "Waging Cold War in a Model City: The Investigation of 'Subversive' Influences in the 1967 Detroit Riot," *Michigan Historical Review* 30, no. 1 (2004): 3–30.

[51] The term 'Summer of Love' was an advertising slogan, coined by the Council for a Summer of Love that formed in April 1967 for the sake of organizing events planned for August of that year. For discussion of the workings of the council, and the origins of the