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# Resistance Through Rituals

Youth subcultures in  
post-war Britain

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## THEORY I

# SUBCULTURES, CULTURES AND CLASS

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Our subject in this volume is Youth Cultures: our object, to explain them as a phenomenon, and their appearance in the post-war period. The subject has, of course, been massively treated, above all in the mass media. Yet, many of these surveys and analyses seem mainly to have multiplied the confusions and extended the mythologies surrounding the topic. By treating it in terms of its spectacular features only, these surveys have become part of the very phenomenon we want to explain. First, then, we must clear the ground, try to get behind the myths and explanations which cover up, rather than clarify, the problem. We have to construct the topic first - partly by demolishing certain concepts which, at present, are taken as adequately defining it. Necessarily, this exercise of penetrating beneath a popular construction must be done with care, lest we discard the 'rational kernel' along with its over-publicised husk.

The social and political meaning of Youth Cultures is not easy to assess: though their visibility has been consistently high. 'Youth' appeared as an emergent category in post-war Britain, one of the most striking and visible manifestations of social change in the period. 'Youth' provided the focus for official reports, pieces of legislation, official interventions. It was signified as a social problem by the moral guardians of the society - something we 'ought to do something about'. Above all, Youth played an important role as a cornerstone in the construction of understandings, interpretations and quasi-explanations about the period. As the Rowntree study of the Popular Press and Social Change suggested:

Youth was, in both papers [the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Mirror*] and perhaps in the whole press of the period, a powerful but concealed *metaphor* for social change: the compressed image of a society which had crucially changed, in terms of basic life-styles and values - changed, in ways calculated to upset

the official political framework, but in ways not yet calculable in traditional political terms ..

(Smith et. al., 1975)

It would be difficult to sustain the argument that a phenomenon as massively present and visible as 'Youth Culture', occupying a pivotal position in the history and consciousness of the period, is as a pure construction of the media, a surface phenomenon only. However, Gramsci warned us that, "in studying a structure, it is necessary to distinguish organic movements (relatively permanent) from movements which may be termed 'conjunctural', and which appear as occasional, immediate, almost accidental". The aim must be to "find the correct relation between what is organic and what is conjunctural" (Gramsci, 1971: 177). The 'phenomenal form' - Youth Culture provides a point of departure, only, for such an analysis. We cannot afford to be blind to such a development (as some 'sceptical materialists' of the old left have been, with due respect to the recent debate in *Marxism Today*) any more than we can afford to be blinded by them (as some 'visionary idealists' of the new left have at times been).

#### A. Some definitions

We begin with some minimal definitions. The term, 'Youth Culture', directs us to the 'cultural' aspects of youth. We understand the word 'culture' to refer to that level at which social groups develop distinct patterns of life, and give expressive form to their social and material life-experience. Culture is the way, the forms, in which groups 'handle' the raw material of their social and material existence. "We must suppose the raw material of life experience to be at one pole, and all the infinitely complex human disciplines and systems, articulate and inarticulate, formalised in institutions or dispersed in the least formal ways, which 'handle', transmit or distort this raw material, to be at the other" (Thompson, 1960). 'Culture' is the practice which realises or objectivates group-life in meaningful shape and form. "As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce" (Marx, 1970: 42). The 'culture' of a group or class is the peculiar and distinctive 'way of life' of the group or class, the meanings, values and ideas embodied in institutions, in social relations, in systems of beliefs, in mores and customs, in the uses of objects and material life. Culture is the distinctive shapes in which this material and social organisation of life expresses itself. A culture includes the 'maps of meaning' which make things intelligible to its members. These 'maps of meaning' are not simply carried around in the head: they are objectivated in the patterns of social organisation and relationship through which the individual becomes

a 'social individual'. Culture is the way the social relations of a group are structured and shaped: but it is also the way those shapes are experienced, understood and interpreted.

A social individual, born into a particular set of institutions and relations, is at the same moment born into a peculiar configuration of meanings, which give her access to and locate her within 'a culture'. The 'law of society' and the 'law of culture' (the symbolic ordering of social life) are one and the same. These structures - of social relationship and of meaning - shape the on-going collective existence of groups. But they also limit, modify and constrain how groups live and reproduce their social existence. Men and women are, thus, formed, and form themselves through society, culture and history. So the existing cultural patterns form a sort of historical reservoir - a pre-constituted 'field of the possibles' - which groups take up, transform, develop. Each group makes something of its starting conditions - and through this 'making', through this practice, culture is reproduced and transmitted. But this practice only takes place within the given field of possibilities and constraints (See, Sartre, 1963). "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past" (Marx, 1951: 225). Culture, then, embodies the trajectory of group life through history: always under conditions and with 'raw materials' which cannot wholly be of its own making.

Groups which exist within the same society and share some of the same material and historical conditions no doubt also understand, and to a certain extent share each others' 'culture'. But just as different groups and classes are unequally ranked in relation to one another, in terms of their productive relations, wealth and power, so cultures are differently ranked, and stand in opposition to one another, in relations of domination and subordination, along the scale of 'cultural power'. The definitions of the world, the 'maps of meaning' which express the life situation of those groups which hold the monopoly of power in society, command the greatest weight and influence, secrete the greatest legitimacy. The world tends to be classified out and ordered in terms and through structures which most directly express the power, the position, the hegemony, of the powerful interest in that society. Thus,

The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control, at the same time, over the means of mental production, so that, thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it ... Insofar as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an epoch ... they do this in its whole range, hence, among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas,

and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch.

(Marx, 1970: 64)

This does not mean that there is only *one* set of ideas or cultural forms in a society. There will be more than one tendency at work within the dominant ideas of a society. Groups or classes which do not stand at the apex of power, nevertheless find ways of expressing and realising in their culture their subordinate position and experiences. In so far as there is more than one fundamental class in a society (and capitalism is essentially the bringing together, around production, of two fundamentally *different* classes - capital and labour) there will be more than one major cultural configuration in play at a particular historical moment. But the structures and meanings which most adequately reflect the position and interests of the most powerful class - however complex it is internally - will stand, in relation to all the others, as a *dominant* social-cultural order. The dominant culture represents itself as *the* culture. It tries to define and contain all other cultures within its inclusive range. Its views of the world, unless challenged, will stand as the most natural, all-embracing, universal culture. Other cultural configurations will not only be subordinate to this dominant order: they will enter into struggle with it, seek to modify, negotiate, resist or even overthrow its reign - its *hegemony*. The struggle between classes over material and social life thus always assumes the forms of a continuous struggle over the distribution of 'cultural power'. We might want, here, to make a distinction between 'culture' and 'ideology'. Dominant and subordinate classes will each have distinct cultures. But when one culture gains ascendancy over the other, and when the subordinate culture *experiences* itself in terms prescribed by the dominant culture, then the dominant culture has also become the basis of a dominant ideology.

The dominant culture of a complex society is never a homogeneous structure. It is layered, reflecting different interests within the dominant class (e.g. an aristocratic versus a bourgeois outlook), containing different traces from the past (e.g. religious ideas within a largely secular culture), as well as emergent elements in the present. Subordinate cultures will not always be in open conflict with it. They may, for long periods, coexist with it, negotiate the spaces and gaps in it, make inroads into it, "warrenning it from within" (Thompson, 1965). However, though the nature of this struggle over culture can never be reduced to a simple opposition, it is crucial to replace the notion of 'culture' with the more concrete, historical concept of 'cultures': a redefinition which brings out more clearly the fact that cultures always stand in relations of domination - and subordination - to one another, are always, in some sense, in

struggle with one another. The singular term, 'culture', can only indicate, in the most general and abstract way, the large cultural configurations at play in a society at any historical moment. We must move at once to the determining relationships of domination and subordination in which these configurations stand; to the processes of incorporation and resistance which define the cultural dialectic between them; and to the institutions which transmit and reproduce 'the culture' (i.e. the dominant culture) in its dominant or 'hegemonic' form.

In modern societies, the most fundamental groups are the social classes, and the major cultural configurations will be, in a fundamental though often mediated way, 'class cultures'. Relative to these cultural-class configurations, *sub-cultures* are sub-sets - smaller, more localised and differentiated structures, within one or other of the larger cultural networks. We must, first, see sub-cultures in terms of their relation to the wider class-cultural networks of which they form a distinctive part. When we examine this relationship between a sub-culture and the 'culture' of which it is a part, we call the latter the '*parent*' culture. This must not be confused with the particular relationship between 'youth' and their 'parents', of which much will be said below. What we mean is that a sub-culture, though differing in important ways - in its '*focal concerns*', its *peculiar shapes* and activities - from the culture from which it derives, will also share some things in common with that 'parent' culture. The bohemian sub-culture of the *avant-garde* which has arisen from time to time in the modern city, is both distinct from its 'parent' culture (the urban culture of the middle class intelligentsia) and yet also a part of it (sharing with it a modernising outlook, standards of education, a privileged position vis-a-vis productive labour, and so on). In the same way, the 'search for pleasure and excitement' which some analysts have noted as a marked feature of the 'delinquent sub-culture of the gang' in the working class, also shares something basic and fundamental with it. Sub-cultures, then, must first be related to the 'parent cultures' of which they are a sub-set. But, sub-cultures must also be analysed in terms of their relation to the dominant culture - the overall disposition of cultural power in the society as a whole. Thus, we may distinguish respectable, 'rough', delinquent and the criminal sub-cultures *within* working class culture: but we may also say that, though they differ amongst themselves, they all derive in the first instance from a 'working class parent culture': hence, they are all subordinate sub-cultures, in relation to the dominant middle-class or bourgeois culture. (We believe this goes some way towards meeting Graham Murdock's call for a more "symmetrical" analysis of sub-cultures. See his article below.)

Sub-cultures must exhibit a distinctive enough shape and structure to make them identifiably different from their 'parent' culture.

They must be focussed around certain activities, values, certain uses of material artefacts, territorial spaces etc. which significantly differentiate them from the wider culture. But, since they are sub-sets, there must also be significant things which bind and articulate them with the 'parent' culture. The famous Kray twins, for example, belonged both to a highly differentiated 'criminal sub-culture' in East London and to the 'normal' life and culture of the East End working class (of which indeed, the 'criminal sub-culture' has always been a clearly identifiable part). The behaviour of the Krays in terms of the criminal fraternity marks the differentiating axis of that sub-culture: the relation of the Krays to their mother, family, home and local pub is the binding, the articulating axis. (Pearson, 1973; Hebdige, 1974).

Sub-cultures, therefore, take shape around the distinctive activities and 'focal concerns' of groups. They can be loosely or tightly bounded. Some sub-cultures are merely loosely-defined strands or 'milieux' within the parent culture: they possess no distinctive 'world' of their own. Others develop a clear, coherent identity and structure. Generally, we deal in this volume only with 'sub-cultures' (whether drawn from a middle or working class 'parent culture') which have reasonably tight boundaries, distinctive shapes, which have cohered around particular activities, focal concerns and territorial spaces. When these tightly-defined groups are also distinguished by age and generation, we call them 'youth sub-cultures'.

'Youth sub-cultures' form up on the terrain of social and cultural life. Some youth sub-cultures are regular and persistent features of the 'parent' class-culture: the ill-famed 'culture of delinquency' of the working-class adolescent male, for example. But some sub-cultures appear only at particular historical moments: they become visible, are identified and labelled (either by themselves or by others): they command the stage of public attention for a time: then they fade, disappear or are so widely diffused that they lose their distinctiveness. It is the latter kind of sub-cultural formation which primarily concerns us here. The peculiar dress, style, focal concerns, milieu, etc. of the Teddy Boy, the Mod, the Rocker or the Skin-head set them off, as distinctive groupings, both from the broad patterns of working-class culture as a whole, and also from the more diffused patterns exhibited by 'ordinary' working class boys (and, to a more limited extent, girls). Yet, despite these differences, it is important to stress that, as sub-cultures, they continue to exist within, and coexist with, the more inclusive culture of the class from which they spring. Members of a sub-culture may walk, talk, act, look 'different' from their parents and from some of their peers: but they belong to the same families, go to the same schools, work at much the same jobs, live down the same 'mean streets' as their peers and parents. In

certain crucial respects, they share the same position (vis-a-vis the dominant culture), the same fundamental and determining life-experiences, as the 'parent' culture from which they derive. Through dress, activities, leisure pursuits and life-style, they may project a different cultural response or 'solution' to the problems posed for them by their material and social class position and experience. But the membership of a sub-culture cannot protect them from the determining matrix of experiences and conditions which shape the life of their class as a whole. They experience and respond to the same basic problematic as other members of their class who are not so differentiated and distinctive in a 'sub-cultural' sense. Especially in relation to the dominant culture, their sub-culture remains like other elements in their class culture - subordinate and subordinated.

In what follows, we shall try to show why this double articulation of youth sub-cultures - first, to their 'parent' culture (e.g. working class culture), second, to the dominant culture - is a necessary way of staging the analysis. For our purposes, sub-cultures represent a necessary, 'relatively autonomous', but *inter-mediary* level of analysis. Any attempt to relate sub-cultures to the 'socio-cultural formation as a whole' must grasp its complex unity by way of these necessary differentiations.

'Youth Culture', in the singular and with capital letters, is a term we borrow from and refer to in our analysis, but which we cannot and do not use in any but a descriptive sense. It is, of course, precisely the term most common in popular and journalistic usage. It is how the 'phenomenon of Youth' in the post-war period has been most common-sensically appropriated. It appears to be a simple and common starting point, a simple concept. Actually, it presupposes already extremely complex relations. Indeed, what it disguises and represses - differences between different strata of youth, the class-basis of youth cultures, the relation of 'Youth Culture' to the parent culture and the dominant culture, etc. - is more significant than what it reveals. The term is premised on the view that what happened to 'youth' in this period is radically and qualitatively different from anything that had happened before. It suggests that all the things which youth got into in this period were more significant than the different kinds of youth groups, or the differences in their social class composition. It sustains certain ideological interpretations - e.g. that age and generation mattered most, or that Youth Culture was 'incipiently classless' - even, that 'youth' had itself become a class. Thus it identified 'Youth Culture' exclusively with its most phenomenal aspect - its music, styles, leisure consumption. Of course, post-war youth did engage in distinctive cultural pursuits, and this was closely linked with the expansion of the leisure and fashion industries, directed at the 'teenage market'. But the term 'Youth Culture' confuses

and identifies the two aspects, whereas what is needed is a detailed picture of how youth groups fed off and appropriated things provided by the market, and, in turn, how the market tried to expropriate and incorporate things produced by the sub-cultures: in other words, the dialectic between youth and the youth market industry. The term 'Youth Culture' appropriates the situation of the young almost exclusively in terms of the commercial and publicity manipulation and exploitation of the young. As a concept, it has little or no explanatory power. We must try to get behind this market phenomenon, to its deeper social, economic and cultural roots. In short, our aim is to de-throne or de-construct the term, 'Youth Culture', in favour of a more complex set of categories. (Part of this demolition work is done in the article on Style, below.)

We shall try, first, to replace the concept of 'Youth Culture' with the more structural concept of 'sub-culture'. We then want to reconstruct 'sub-cultures' in terms of their relation, first, to 'parent' cultures, and, through that, to the dominant culture, or better, to the struggle between dominant and subordinate cultures. By trying to set up these intermediary levels in place of the immediate catch-all idea of 'Youth Culture', we try to show how youth sub-cultures are related to class relations, to the division of labour and to the productive relations of the society, without destroying what is specific to their content and position.

It is essential to bear in mind that the topic treated here relates *only* to those sections of working-class or middle-class youth where a response to their situation took a distinctive sub-cultural form. This must in no way be confused with an attempt to delineate the social and historical position of working-class youth as a whole in the period. The great majority of working-class youth never enters a tight or coherent sub-culture at all. Individuals may, in their personal life-careers, move into and out of one, or indeed several, such sub-cultures. Their relation to the existing sub-cultures may be fleeting or permanent, marginal or central. The sub-cultures are important because there the response of youth takes a peculiarly tangible form. But, in the post-war history of the class, these may be less significant than what most young people do most of the time. The relation between the 'everyday life' and the 'sub-cultural life' of different sections of youth is an important question in its own right, and must not be subsumed under the more limited topic which we address here. As Howard Parker reminds us, even the 'persistent offenders' of the delinquent sub-cultures are only occasionally preoccupied with illegal or delinquent behaviour (Parker, 1974). For the majority, school and work are more structurally significant - even at the level of consciousness - than style and music (see Graham Murdock's article, below).

As Paul Corrigan eloquently testifies, most young working-class boys are principally concerned most of the time with the biggest occupation of all - how to pass the time: the 'dialectics of doing nothing' (see Corrigan's 'Doing Nothing' piece, below).

## B. Youth: metaphor for social change

We propose, in this section, to move from the most phenomenal aspects of youth sub-cultures to the deeper meanings, in three stages. We deal, first, with the most immediate aspect - the qualitative novelty of Youth Culture. Then, with the most visible aspects of social change which were variously held to be responsible for its emergence. Finally, we look at the wider debate, to which the debate about Youth Culture was an important, though subsidiary appendage.

We have said that an important element of the concept, 'Youth Culture', was its post-war novelty. The following quotation from Roberts reminds us to be cautious on this account; it could almost be read as referring to any of the distinctive post-war youth culture formations, though what it describes is in fact an Edwardian youth in 'the classic slum':

The groups of young men and youths who gathered at the end of most slum streets on fine evenings earned the condemnation of all respectable citizens. They were damned every summer by city magistrates and increasingly harried by the police. In the late nineteenth century the Northern Scuttler and his "moll" had achieved a notoriety as widespread as that of any gang in modern times. He had his own style of dress - the union shirt, bell-bottomed trousers, the heavy leather belt, pricked out in fancy designs with the large steel buckle and the thick, iron-shod clogs. His girl-friend commonly wore clogs and shawl and a skirt with vertical stripes.

(Roberts, 1971: 123)

It is vital, in any analysis of contemporary phenomena, to think historically; many of the short-comings in the 'youth' area are due, in part at least, to an absent or foreshortened historical dimension. In the specific area of 'Youth Culture' this historical myopia is perhaps only to be expected, for few historical studies, specifically comparing the post-war situation of youth with their situation in previous periods as yet exist (there is, of course, a growing interest in the social history of childhood and youth, and in leisure and the school, influenced by a social history perspective. Phil Cohen and Dave Robbins' forthcoming volume on sub-cultures will have a strong historical and comparative framework). The Roberts quotation clearly points to this thread of historical continuity which we cannot afford to overlook.

On the other hand, there is, also, much evidence to suggest that there were distinctively new historical features in the 1950's which should make us wary of the opposite fault: the tendency to adopt a static or circular view of history and so rob the post-war period of its historical specificity. The significance of the many visible structural and cultural changes of the post-war period were weighted differently by commentators and analysts at the time: but, in most calculations, the emergent 'Youth Culture' figured prominently. It was, according to emphasis, one *product* of these changes, their *epitome*, or, most sinisterly, a *portent* of future changes. But, whatever the emphasis, Youth Culture, or aspects of it, was centrally linked to how these changes were interpreted.

One important set of inter-related changes hinged around 'affluence', the increased importance of the market and consumption, and the growth of the 'Youth-oriented' leisure industries. The most distinctive product of these changes was the arrival of Mark Abrams's 'teenage consumer'; relatively speaking, Abrams saw 'teenagers' as the prime beneficiaries of the new affluence:

..... as compared with 1938, their real earnings (i.e. after allowing for the fall in value of money) have increased by 50% (which is double the rate of expansion for adults), and their real 'discretionary' spending has probably risen by 100%  
(Abrams, 1959: 9)

It was but a short step from here to the view that teenagers' collective habits of consumption constituted "distinctive teenage spending for distinctive teenage ends in a distinctive teenage world" (Abrams, 1959: 10); in other words, the economic basis for a unique, self-contained, self-generating Youth Culture.

The second nexus of changes with which Youth Culture came readily to be identified, as one unfortunate by-product, were those surrounding the arrival of mass communications, mass entertainment, mass art and mass culture.

Central to this notion was the idea that more and more people were being submitted (and the passivity implied was not accidental) to ever-more uniform cultural processes. This was the result of the spread in mass consumption, plus the 'political enfranchisement' of the masses, and (above all) the growth in mass communications. The spread of mass communications was identified with the growth of the press, radio, television, mass publishing (and not with computers, internal TV and video-systems, data banks, information storage and retrieval, etc. - the commercial and managerial 'uses' which provided the real infrastructure of the 'communications revolution'). For those interpreting social change within the framework of what came to be called the 'mass society thesis', the birth of commercial television in Britain in the mid 1950's was a watershed event.

Youth Culture was connected with this set of changes in two ways. Firstly, and most simply, the creation of a truly mass culture meant the arrival of the means of 'imitation' and 'manipulation' on a national scale. The notion that Youth Culture was a result of such 'mindless' imitation by teenagers, fostered by shrewd and 'manipulating' commercial interests, is captured indelibly by the following quotation from Paul Johnson, probably the least perceptive commentator on Youth, in a field distinctive for its bottomless mediocrity:

Both T.V. channels now run weekly programmes in which popular records are played to teenagers and judged. While the music is performed, the cameras linger savagely over the faces of the audience. What a bottomless chasm of vacuity they reveal. Huge faces, bloated with cheap confectionery and smeared with chain-store make-up, the open, sagging mouths and glazed eyes, the hands mindlessly drumming in time to the music, the broken stiletto heels, the shoddy, stereotyped, 'with-it' clothes: here, apparently, is a collective portrait of a generation enslaved by a commercial machine.

(Johnson, 1964)

Secondly, and more sophisticatedly, some aspects of the new Youth Culture were seen, portentously, as representing the worst effects of the new 'mass culture' - its tendency to 'unbend the springs' of working class action and resistance. Hoggart, in so many respects our most sensitive recorder of the experiential nuances of working-class culture, has to be counted among the offenders here; for his portrait of the "juke-box boys ..... who spend their evenings listening in harshly lighted milk-bars to the nickelodeons" (Hoggart, 1958: 247) could almost - in its lack of concreteness and 'felt' qualities - have been written by one of the new 'hack' writers he so perceptively analyses:

The hedonistic but passive barbarian who rides in a fifty-horsepower bus for threepence, to see a five-million-dollar film for one-and-eight-pence, is not simply a social oddity; he is a portent.  
(Hoggart, 1958: 250)

The third set of changes which were said to have 'produced' a qualitatively-distinct Youth Culture turned around a hiatus in social experience precipitated by the war. Generally, the argument maintained that the disruptive effects of the war on children born during that period - absent fathers, evacuation and other breaks in normal family life, as well as the constant violence - was responsible for the 'new' juvenile delinquency of the mid 50's, typified by the Teds, which was itself seen as a precursor of a more general tendency towards violence in Youth Culture. Fyvel, for example, whilst not restricting himself to this 'war' explanation, nevertheless does see the Teddy Boys as "Children of an age of violence, born during a world war ...." (Fyvel: 1963, Preface); whilst Nuttall, more simply, identifies

the single fact of the dropping of the first atomic bomb as responsible for the qualitative difference between the pre- and post-war generations:

right ... at the point of dropping bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki the generations became divided in a very crucial way ... The people who had not yet reached puberty ... were incapable of conceiving of life with a future ... the so-called 'generation gap' started then and has been increasing ever since.

(Nuttall, 1970: 20)

The fourth set of changes which provided an important context for the 'emergence' of Youth Culture related to the sphere of education. This interpretation pin-pointed two developments above all - 'secondary education for all' in age-specific schools, and the massive extension of higher education. Many things were cited as providing the impetus here: the 1944 Education Act itself, which instituted the primary/secondary division for all; the expanded 'pool of talent' consequent upon both this reorganisation and the post-war 'bulge'; the meritocratic ideology of social mobility primarily through the education system; the attempts to make a positive correlation between the country's economic growth-rate and its number of highly-trained personnel; the increased demand in the economy for technicians and technologists. But, for our purposes, the effect was singular. Quite simply, the increasing number of young people spending an increasing proportion of their youth in age-specific educational institutions from the age of eleven onwards - a quite different situation from the pre-war period when almost half the post-eleven year olds were still receiving 'secondary' education in all-age elementary schools - was seen, by some commentators, to be creating the pre-conditions for the emergence of a specifically 'adolescent society'. Coleman made the point most explicitly with his argument that an American high school pupil:

... is 'cut off' from the rest of society, forced inwards towards his own age group. With his fellows, he comes to constitute a small society, one that has its most important interactions within itself, and maintains only a few threads of connections with the outside adult society.

(Coleman, 1961: 3)

Last, but by no means least, the arrival of the whole range of distinctive styles in dress and rock-music cemented any doubts anyone may have had about a 'unique' younger generation. Here, as elsewhere, the specifics of the styles and music, in terms of who was wearing or listening to what, and why, were crucially overlooked in face of the new stylistic invasion - the image, depicted weekly in the new 'teenage' television shows as a 'whole scene going'. Depending on how you viewed this pop-cultural explosion, either the barbarians were at the gates, or the turn of the rebel hipster had come at last. Again, Jeff Nuttall provides us with the most extravagant and indulgent example:

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The teddy boys were waiting for Elvis Presley. Everybody under twenty all over the world was waiting. He was the super salesman of mass distribution-hip ... he was a public butcher god with the insolence of a Genet murderer ... Most of all he was unvarnished sex taken and set way out in the open ... The Presley riots were the first spontaneous gatherings of the community of the new sensibilities .....

(Nuttall, 1970: 29-30)

These explanations for the appearance of a distinct Youth Culture emerged out of a much wider debate about the whole nature of post-war social change. The key terms in this debate were, of course, 'affluence', 'consensus' and 'embourgeoisement'. Affluence referred, essentially, to the boom in working class consumer spending (though it entailed the further, less tenable, proposition that the working classes not only had more to spend, but were *relatively* better off). 'Consensus' meant the acceptance by both political parties, and the majority of the electorate, of all the measures - mixed economy, increased incomes, welfare-state 'safety net' - taken after 1945 to draw people of all classes together, on the basis of a common stake in the system. It also entailed the proposition that a broad consensus of views on all the major issues had developed, including all classes; and hence the end of major political and social conflicts, especially those which exhibited a clear class pattern. 'Embourgeoisement' gathered all these, and other social trends (in education, housing, redevelopment, the move to new towns and estates, etc.), together with the thesis that working-class life and culture was ceasing to be a distinct formation in the society, and everyone was assimilating rapidly towards middle class patterns, aspirations and values. These terms came to be woven together into an all-embracing social myth or 'explanation' of post-war social change. Stated simply, the conventional wisdom was that 'affluence' and 'consensus' together were promoting the rapid 'bourgeoisification' of the working classes. This was producing new social types, new social arrangements and values. One such type was the 'affluent worker' - the "new type of bourgeois worker", family minded, home-centred, security-conscious, instrumentally-oriented, geographically mobile and acquisitive-celebrated in, for example, Zweig's work (Zweig, 1961). Another was the new 'teenager' with his commitment to style, music, leisure and consumption: to a 'classless youth culture'.

Thus, for both parents and their children, class was seen, if at all, as being gradually, but inexorably, eroded as society's major structuring and dynamic factor. Other elements were seen to be replacing it as the basis of social stratification: status, a multiply-differentiated 'pecking order' based on a complex of educational, employment and consumption-achievements; education, the new universally available and meritocratic route by

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which status, through job success, could be achieved; consumption, the new 'affluence' route through which status, on the 'never-never', could be bought by those failing the meritocratic educational hurdle; and age, above all age. Everything that was said and thought about working class adults was raised to a new level with respect to the working-class young. Born during the war, they were seen as having least experience of and commitment to pre-war social patterns. Because of their age, they were direct beneficiaries of the welfare state and new educational opportunities; least constrained by older patterns of, or attitudes to, spending and consumption; most involved in a guilt-free commitment to pleasure and immediate satisfactions. Older people were, as it were, half-way between the old and the new world. But 'youth' was wholly and exclusively in and of the new post-war world. And what, principally, made the difference was, precisely, their age. Generation defined them as the group most in the forefront of every aspect of social change in the post-war period. Youth was 'the vanguard' of social change. Thus, the simple fact of when you were born displaced the more traditional category of class as a more potent index of social position; and the pre-war chasm between the classes was translated into a mere 'gap' between the generations. Some commentators further compounded this myth by reconstituting class on the basis of the new gap: youth was a 'new class' (see, for example: Musgrove, 1968; Rowntree and Rowntree, 1968; Neville, 1971).

Yet the whole debate depended crucially on the validity of the three central concepts we started out with - affluence, consensus and embourgeoisement; and here we must begin the task of disentangling the real from the constructed or ideological elements contained in these terms.

In general terms, the reality of post-war improvements in living standards - the real element in 'affluence' - cannot be questioned. The years 1951-64 undoubtedly saw what Pinto-Duschinsky calls, "a steadier and much faster increase in the average standard of living than at any other time in this century"; using "any major indicator of performance, the 1950's and the early 1960's were a great improvement on the years between the wars and on the showing of the Edwardian period" (Pinto-Duschinsky, 1970: 56-57). However, this general rise in living standards critically obscured the fact that the relative positions of the classes had remained virtually unchanged. It was this mythical aspect of affluence, concealed under the persistent and insistent 'never had it so good' ideology, which gradually emerged when poverty - and not just pockets of it - was rediscovered, from the early 1960's onwards.

The massive spending on consumer durables obscured the fact "that Britain lagged behind almost all her main industrial competitors and that she failed to solve the problem of sterling" (Pinto-Duschinsky, 1970: 58; see also Glyn and Sutcliffe, 1972). In fact, Britain's affluent 'miracle' was constructed on very shaky economic foundations, "upon temporary and fortuitous circumstances" (Bogdanor and Skidelsky, eds., 1970: 8), on a 'miraculous' historical conjuncture. The Tory policy of "Bread and Circuses" - i.e. "the sacrifice of policies desirable for the long term well-being of a country in favour of over-lenient measures and temporary palliatives bringing in immediate political return" (Pinto-Duschinsky, 1970: 59) or, more succinctly, the promotion of private consumption at the expense of the public sector - was only *one possible response* to this situation, not an *inevitable* outcome.

Consensus, too, in general terms, had a real basis. The war period with its cross-class mobilisations, economic planning, political coalitions and enforced egalitarianism provided a base on which the social reforms of the post-war Labour government could be mounted; and both the war and the post-war reforms provided something of a platform for consensus. Even the old free-market figure, Churchill, returned to power in 1951, had, in his own words, "come to know the nation and what must be done to retain power" (Moran, 1968: 517). In other words, Churchill, and the more astute of the Tory leadership, had come to realise that the success of their 'freedom from controls' anti-austerity programme was crucially predicated upon a 'reformed' capitalism, a socially-minded capitalism with a 'human face'. Their electoral 'clothes stolen', and "haunted by a composite image of the potential Labour voter as quintessentially *petit-bourgeois*, and therefore liable to be frightened off by a radical alternative to Conservatism" (Miliband, 1961: 339), the Labour leadership lost its nerve, and capitulated to 'the consensus'. Official party politics were dominated in the 1950's by "the politics of the centre", whilst "the most vigorous political debates of the 1950's and 1960's were conducted independently of the party battle" (Pinto Duschinsky, 1970: 73, 74).

However, whilst political consensus (or stalemate) was the overriding feature of the 1950's and early 1960's, the fragility of this consensus was revealed "in the nature of the party struggle" during these years. Despite "the ultimate success of the Tories in retaining office for thirteen years, the political battle was desperately close throughout the whole period" (ibid: 69). In other words, the notion of a political consensus obscures the fact that the Conservative survival was predicated constantly on the most short-term expediency imaginable (e.g. the 'give-away' inflationary budget of April, 1955, was followed by a snap April election, which was in turn followed by the deflat-

ionary Autumn 'cuts', and the stagnation of 1956). For the whole thirteen years of Tory rule, despite this vote-catching 'politics of bribery', practically half the electorate voted against the Tories at each election. Taken together with the finding by Goldthorpe and his colleagues, that "the large majority of the affluent workers in their study were, and generally had been Labour supporters" (1969: 172), echoing other sociological enquiries - it is quite possible to read 'consensus' in a different way: as betokening a waiting attitude by the British working class (often mistaken at the time for 'apathy') which an effective lead to the left by Labour at any point in the period might effectively have crystallised in a different direction (Goldthorpe et al. themselves make this argument: see, 1969: 190-5).

'Embourgeoisement', the third and final term in our sociological trinity, was the product of the other two. As such, it was the most constructed term of the three, since the frailties of the other two terms were compounded in it. Even so, the 'embourgeoisement' notion, too, had some real basis, as even its critics insisted:

Our own research indicates clearly enough how increasing affluence and its correlates can have many far-reaching consequences - both in undermining the viability or desirability of established life-styles and in encouraging or requiring the development of new patterns of attitudes, behaviour and relationships.

(Goldthorpe et. al, 1969: 163)

Yet the overriding conclusion of the Cambridge team's research, which submitted Zweig's "new bourgeois worker" to sociological scrutiny, only confirmed what their earlier paper had suggested (Goldthorpe and Lockwood, 1963):

what the changes in question predominantly entailed was not the ultimate assimilation of manual workers and their families into the social world of the middle class, but rather a much less dramatic process of convergence, in certain particular respects, in the normative orientations of some sections of the working class and of some white-collar groups

(Goldthorpe et. al. 1969: 26)

In other words, 'embourgeoisement', if it meant anything at all, referred to something very different, and far more limited in scope, than anything which its more vigorous proponents, such as Zweig, envisaged. Even at the time, some of the political extrapolations made on the basis of the thesis seemed far-fetched, ideological rather than empirical in character (e.g. Abrams, 1969). Indeed, looking back at the 'instrumental collectivism' of Goldthorpe and Lockwood's 'affluent worker' from the perspective of the later 1960's and 1970's; at the strike-prone nature of the

motor industry, and the 'leadership' which this sector of labour displayed in sustained wage militancy and militant shop-floor organisation, the whole 'embourgeoisement' thesis looks extremely thin and shaky, at least in the terms in which it was currently discussed at the time. (There is something to be said for the view that no student should read the account of the 'affluent worker' at the Vauxhall plant at Luton without setting it cheek by jowl with the experience of the Halewood plant near Liverpool, so graphically described by Huw Beynon, (1973.)

In sum, despite some significant real shifts in attitudes and living patterns, considerably overlaid by the sustained ideological onslaught of 'affluence', what comes through most strongly is the stubborn refusal of class - that tired, 'worn-out' category - to disappear as a major dimension and dynamic of the social structure.

### C. The reappearance of class

The various interpretations of post-war change, enshrined in the holy trinity of affluence, consensus and embourgeoisement, rested on a singular social myth - that the working class was disappearing. This postulate of the 'withering away of class' was challenged from the late 1950's onwards along two main dimensions.

Firstly, there was the rediscovery of poverty and the existence of continual, great inequalities of wealth, opened up by the critiques of the Titmuss Group (Titmuss, 1962), Westergaard (1965) and others. These showed that poverty was a structural not an accidental feature of capitalism, that wealth had been only nominally redistributed and that the main beneficiaries of the Welfare State were, in fact, the middle classes. A very small minority still owned a very large proportion of private wealth; and further, the proportions of national income going to the working and middle classes had remained roughly the same after 1945. A bedmate of the alleged move to equality in wealth - the idea that 'opportunity structures' of society had been thrown open and a new fluid social structure had arisen - was also shown to be an empty promise. Even if relative inequalities between classes had declined, the absolute distribution of life-chances had not. Certainly, changes in the occupational structure had taken place; but, as was again argued, the implications of these changes had been much exaggerated. The number of clerical jobs, for instance, greatly increased, but this was coupled with a decline in the relative status of white collar occupations produced by greater rationalisation and automation. These occupations had been stratified, leading often to a widening of the divisions between clerical 'supervisors' and the clerical

'shop-floor'. The increased unionisation and, later, the unexpected militancy of bank clerks, nurses, teachers and local government workers, was one further important development leading in the same direction. At the very least, the recent militancy among such groups suggests that the view that the rise in white collar occupations will lead to a uniform, stable, 'moderate', middle class society is open to question.

Secondly, there was the postulate that power had been diffused via the all-round increase of wealth, the decline in relative inequality, the greater accountability of socially responsible management, and the separation of ownership from managerial control. Allied to this was the thesis that the separation of the sphere of work from the increasingly privatised sphere of home life was leading to a simple 'economic instrumentalism' in worker's attitudes to the unions (devoid of any political content it may have had); indeed, that increasing affluence had led to a permanent pacification of industrial militancy. However, Westergaard, for example, has argued convincingly that, while working class life styles may have changed, the widening of worker's horizons and demands is a potential source of unrest rather than of stability unless the means of fulfilment are given. This is the so-called revolution of rising expectations or what Anderson called "the politics of instrumental collectivism".

Working-class resistance to anti-union and anti-strike legislation in the 1970's, like the sustained demand (through the 1960's into the 1970's) for wages to keep pace with inflation, clearly support this interpretation (though it is important to add that this defensive strategy and wage militancy has, as yet, failed to find clear political expression). In addition, resistance by sections of the working class to the incursions into the localities by property speculators and the redevelopers, and to steadily rising rents, finding its political expression in a community, non-industrial politics rather than in electoral politics and the Labour Party, has also been underplayed, devalued or ignored. Indeed, when the thesis of the 'diffusion of power' is looked at from the perspective, not of the consensual 1950's but of the polarised 1970's, it loses much of its credibility (though the shifts in the patterns of class conflict must not be overlooked). As Westergaard argues:

... post-capitalism commentary has been noticeably blind to the sources of actual opposition and latent dissent to the institutions and assumptions of the current social order within the population at large: perennially prone to confuse the institutionalisation of conflict with consensus, and generally incurious about the continuing pressures under which the institutionalisation might loosen, shift or give way. The existence of those pressures should be a constant reminder of the contingent character of the present social structure, and of the limited range of assumptions from which policies conventionally are drawn which envisage little or no basic change in that structure.  
(Westergaard, 1974: 38)

If we had asked, at the time, 'which social group or category most immediately encapsulates the essential features of these social changes?' we would almost certainly have been given the answer - Youth: the new Youth culture. Even so perceptive an observer as Colin MacInnes could speculate that:

The 'two nations' of our society may perhaps no longer be those of the 'rich' and the 'poor' (or, to use old fashioned terms, the 'upper' and 'working' classes), but those of the teenagers on the one hand and, on the other, all those who have assumed the burdens of adult responsibility.

(MacInnes, 1961: 56)

Yet, just as the master conceptions of affluence, consensus and embourgeoisement required a more cautious and critical approach, so the evidence upon which the direction and manner of change amongst youth was based requires more detailed analysis and careful interpretation. When we look closely at some of those writers who subscribed to notions such as the generation gap, 'distinctive youth culture', welfare state youth, the 'classlessness' of youth culture, and so on, we find that the evidence they bring forward actually undermines the interpretation of it which they offer. Within the 'classlessness' interpretation, there is often a contradictory stress, precisely upon the class structuring of youth. Perhaps the best example is Abrams's work on "The Teenage Consumer" (quoted previously), which depicts a new, separate culture based on the 'teenage market'. However, if we look more closely, this teenage market is recognised by Abrams himself as having a clear class base. Abrams's 'average teenager' was the working class teenager:

..... the teenage market is almost entirely working class. Its middle class members are either still at school and college or else only just beginning on their careers: in either case they dispose of much smaller incomes than their working class contemporaries and it is highly probably, therefore, that not far short of 90 per cent of all teenage spending is conditioned by working class taste and values

(Abrams, 1959: 13)

The image of youth often carried with it the threat of 'what could go wrong'. Fyvel explained one problem group - Teddy Boys - predominantly in terms of the dislocation, caused internationally amongst all youth, by the war, increasing materialism, the stress on success, and the influence of the mass media. However his analysis also has a clear class dimension. For instance he says:

Working-class families are (also) more vulnerable to the socially and psychologically harmful effects of rehousing, as expressed in a break-up of local community life.

(Fyvel, 1963: 213)

In fact, Fyvel sees the Teddy Boy as mainly recruited from young unskilled workers whose earnings were too low and irregular for him to take part in the process of embourgeoisement enjoyed by his better-off working class peers (ibid: 122).

It would seem reasonable to assume that the relation between the position of youth (its features and problems) and social class would receive more adequate attention in empirical sociological studies. However in the 1950's and early 1960's there were few such studies, and they largely took as their starting point the rise in delinquency rates. Those that were undertaken were mainly of an 'ecological' nature, focussed on change in working-class neighbourhoods. However the studies by Mays (1954), Morris (1957), Kerr (1958) and others all tended to be concerned with one particular aspect of these class-defined areas - the 'slum culture', and the identification of a number of 'problem families'. Often it was not clear to what degree the rest of the working class held what one writer defined as the values or 'focal concerns' of the slum-violence, excitement, fantasy, etc. (Miller, 1958). More importantly, the class analysis, though now present, was a rather technically-founded 'social' class one, (usually based on the Registrar General's classification) - a static, dehistoricised concept of class. The ecological areas were not sufficiently dynamically placed within the structure of the classes in the city and the class relations in the wider society at the time. Where a wider analysis was outlined it was largely in terms of our old friends, the triumvirate - affluence, consensus and embourgeoisement.

To replace youth within their various class formations does not, as some critics may think, give a simple uni-dimensional explanatory answer to the sub-cultures problem. Indeed explanation becomes more complex and investigation more necessary if the sub-cultures-and-class relationships are explored without relying on a global notion of 'the new youth leisure class'. Perhaps the most complex body of theory is the American sub-culture theorisation of the late fifties and early sixties e.g. the work of Albert Cohen (1955), Cloward and Ohlin (1960), and its critique and development in Downes (1966). These writers did indeed try to place delinquent sub-cultures within a larger class framework. Unfortunately, in brief terms, American work envisaged the individual youth's class position as one rung on a single status ladder, leading inexorably to middle-class values and goals. The sub-culture problem was then presented as a problem of the disjunction between the (assumed) middle-class goal of success and the restricted (working class) means for achieving them. A youth group or sub-culture was defined as the result of status-failure, or anxiety because of rejection by middle-class institutions; or as the inability to achieve

dominant goals because of blocked opportunities for success. In short there was an underlying consensual view of society based on a belief in the American Dream (of success). 'Youth culture' was a sort of collective compensation for those who could not succeed.

Significant advances upon sub-cultural theory have recently been made, especially by Murdock (1973) and Brake (1973). Following from the traditional theme that sub-cultures arise as a means of collective "problem solving" they locate youth within a quite different analysis of class relations from that of 'opportunity structures.' The major defect in Murdock and Brake's work is that their central concept - that of "problem" - is itself taken too unproblematically. Brake's version of the formation of sub-culture is neatly summarised in the following statement:

Sub-cultures arise (then) as attempts to solve certain problems in the social structures, which are created by contradictions in the larger society . . . . Youth is not in itself a problem, but there are problems created, for example by the conscription of the majority of the young into the lower strata of a meritocratic educational system and then allowing them only to take up occupations which are meaningless, poorly paid and uncreative. Working-class sub-cultures attempt to infuse into this bleak world excitement and colour during the short respite between school and settling down into marriage and adulthood.

(Brake, 1973: 36)

Murdock's formulation is very similar;

The attempt to resolve the contradictions contained in the work situation through the creation of meaningful styles of leisure, typically takes place within the context provided by a sub-culture . . . . Sub-cultures offer a collective solution to the problems posed by shared contradictions in the work situation and provide a social and symbolic context for the development and reinforcement, of collective identity and individual self esteem.

(Murdock, 1973: 9)

Both writers recognise the class basis of youth sub-cultures but they do not fully work out the implications this has for the study of youth. These omissions are due perhaps to the too-heavy reliance upon the concept of subcultures as "problem solving". What we would argue, in general terms, is that the young inherit a cultural orientation from their parents towards a 'problematic' common to the class as a whole, which is likely to weight, shape and signify the meanings they then attach to different areas of their social life. In Murdock's and Brake's work, the situation of the sub-culture's members within an ongoing subordinate culture is ignored in terms of the specific development of the sub-culture. Thus, a whole dimension of class socialisation is omitted, and the elements of negotiation and displacement in the original situated class culture are given too little weight in the analysis.

The advance made by Murdock and Brake was to reconstruct youth cultures in class terms, thereby dissolving the mythology of a universal youth culture. Also, they stressed the role of style (its appropriation and meaning) in representing youth's class experience. Before turning to our own analysis of youth cultures and class relations we must first discuss the work of Phil Cohen whose suggestive analysis throws light on many of these key points.

#### D. Subcultures - an imaginary relation

Phil Cohen (1972) also offers a class analysis, but at a much more sophisticated theoretical level, placing the parent culture in a historical perspective, mapping the relations between sub-cultures and exploring the intra-class dynamic between youth and parents. His analysis was based largely on the London East End working-class community, whose strength, he suggested, depended essentially on the mutual articulation of three structures. First, the extended kinship network, which "provides for many functions of mutual aid and support" and "makes for cultural continuity and stability". The kinship system depended, in turn, on the ecological setting - the working class neighbourhood. This dense socio-cultural space "helps to shape and support the close textures of traditional working-class life, its sense of solidarity, its local loyalties and traditions", and thus provides support "with the day to day problems that arise in the constant struggle to survive". Third, there is the structure of the local economy, striking for its diversity as well as for the fact that "people lived and worked in the East End - there was no need for them to go outside in search of jobs". As a result, "the situation of the work place, its issues and interests, remained tied to the situation outside work - the issues and interests of the community".

Cohen, then, in giving a historical context to this portrait of a traditional working class culture, describes the impact of redevelopment and rationalisation on the family, the community and the local economy. Post-war redevelopment and rehousing led to a depopulation of the area, and the break-up of the traditional neighbourhood: this was compounded by speculative development and by a new influx of immigrant labour, producing a further drift of the local work force. The most immediate impact was on the kinship structure - the fragmentation of the traditional 'extended family' and its partial replacement by the more nucleated 'families of marriage'. "This meant that any problems were bottled up within the immediate inter-personal context which produced them; and at the same time the family relationships were invested with a new intensity, to compensate for the diversity of relationships previously generated through neighbours and wider kin ... the working-class family was thus not

only isolated from outside but undermined from within." (Cohen, 1972: 17). Redevelopment, in the shape now of the new East End estates, exacerbated the effects on working-class family and neighbourhood:

The first effect of the high-density, high-rise schemes was to destroy the function of the street, the local pub, the corner shop, as articulations of communal space. Instead there was only the privatised space of the family unit, stacked one on top of each other, in total isolation, juxtaposed with the totally public space which surrounded it, and which lacked any of the informal social controls generated by the neighbourhood.

(Cohen, 1972: 16)

Alongside this was the drastic reconstruction of the local economy - the dying of small craft industries, their replacement by the larger concerns often situated outside the area, the decline of the family business and the corner shop. The labour force was gradually polarised into two groups: the "highly specialised, skilled and well-paid jobs associated with the new technology" and "the routine, dead-end, low-paid unskilled jobs associated with the labour-intensive sections, especially the service industries". Cohen argues that the effects of these changes were most significant for the respectable part of the East End working class, who found themselves "caught and pulled apart" by two opposing types of social mobility: upwards into the ranks of the new suburban working class elite or downwards into the 'lumpen'.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of this part of Cohen's analysis is the way in which he picks and redefines certain key themes in the affluence-consensus-embourgeoisement thesis: he discards their spectacular and ideological framework, relocates them within the specific historical relations and situation of the working class of a particular area, and arrives at a 'thesis', not about the disappearance or 'embourgeoisement' of a class, but rather about how wider socio-economic change can fragment, unhinge and dislocate its intricate mechanisms and defences. The idea of the 'disappearance of the class as a whole' is replaced by the far more complex and differentiated picture of how the different sectors and strata of a class are driven into different courses and options by their determining socio-economic circumstances. This analysis stems from the impact on the different working-class strata of fundamental economic forces, but it immediately widens into their social, familial and cultural consequences.

The changes Cohen discusses had an impact upon *both* the adult and the young members of the East End working-class community. Though the response was different according to age, position in the generational cycle and experience, the basic material and

social situation which confronted them - the class problematic - was the same, for older men and women, for young workers and their families, and for the working class teenagers. Cohen traces the impact of economic and occupational change on the young:

Looking for opportunities in their father's trades, and lacking the qualifications for the new industries, they were relegated to jobs as van boys, office boys, packers, ware-housemen, etc., and long spells out of work. More and more people, young and old, have to travel out of the community to their jobs, and some eventually moved out to live elsewhere, where suitable work was to be found. The local economy as a whole contracted, and became less diverse.

(Cohen, 1972: 18)

He also follows this analysis through to the changed situation of the young in the family, kinship and neighbourhood situations.

For Cohen, the working class teenager experienced these shifts and fragmentations in direct, material, social, economic and cultural forms. But they also experienced, and attempted to 'resolve' them on the ideological plane. And it is primarily to this attempted 'ideological solution', that he attributes both the rise of, and the differentiation between, the different working class 'youth sub-cultures' of the period:

The latent function of subculture is this - to express and resolve, albeit "magically", the contradictions which remain hidden or unresolved in the parent culture. The succession of subcultures which this parent culture generated can thus all be considered as so many variations on a central theme - the contradiction at an ideological level, between traditional working class puritanism, and the new ideology of consumption: at an economic level between a part of the socially mobile elite, or a part of the new lumpen. Mods, parkers, skinheads, crombies, all represent in their different ways, an attempt to retrieve some of the socially cohesive elements destroyed in the parent culture, and to combine these with elements selected from other class fractions, symbolising one or other of the options confronting it.

(Cohen, 1972: 23)

To give one example of how this complex process worked - Cohen explains the rise of Mods in the following manner:

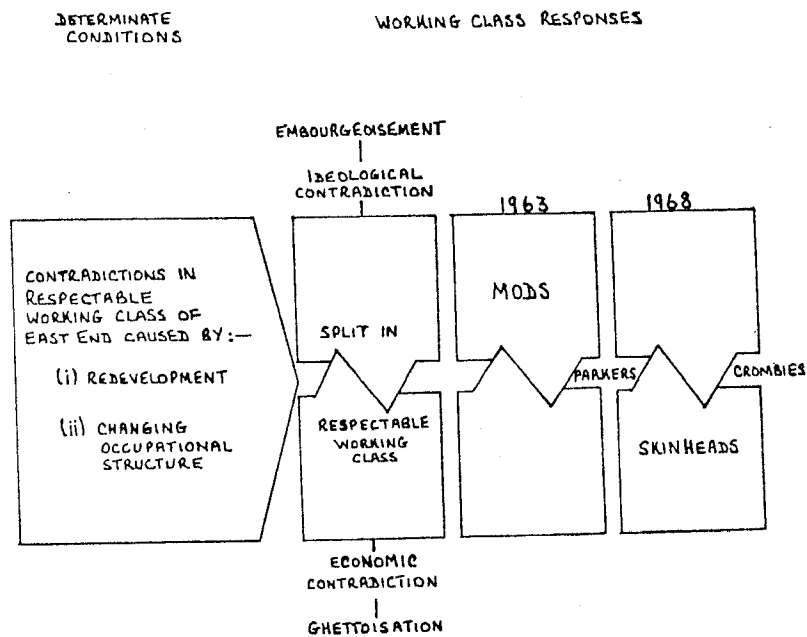
..... the original mod style could be interpreted as an attempt to realise, but in an *imaginary relation* the conditions of existence of the socially mobile white collar worker. While their argot and ritual forms stressed many of the traditional values of their parent culture, their dress and music reflected the hedonistic image of the affluent consumer.

Cohen's general conclusion is, therefore, that:

Mods, Parkers, Skinheads, Crombies are a succession of sub-cultures which all correspond to the same parent culture and which attempt to work out through a series of transformations, the basic problematic or contradiction which is inserted in the sub-culture by the parent culture. So you can distinguish three levels in the analysis of sub-cultures: one is the historical ... which isolates the specific problematic of a particular class fraction ... secondly ... the sub-systems ... and the actual transformations they undergo from one sub-cultural moment to another ... thirdly ... the way the sub-culture is actually lived out by those who are its bearers and supports.

Cohen's analysis proposes one of the most suggestive interpretations of the relationship between the rise of the sub-cultures and the fate of a class. It has the merit of placing a social class formation within a whole historical framework. Its tracing through of the links between economic and cultural change, the impact of change on a 'parent' culture, and the response of youth, is subtle and complex. Certain problems remain unresolved. The analysis - mainly of the 1950's and early 1960's - needs now to be extended up to the 1970's. There are problems with understanding precisely how the impact of certain forces on a parent culture is filtered through, and differentially experienced by its youth; and then, how and why this experience is crystallised into a distinct youth sub-culture. What leads the Mods to explore an 'upward', the Teds or Skinheads to explore a 'downward' option? How tight is the relation between the actual class composition and situation of those sectors of youth choosing one or other of these sub-cultural solutions? What accounts both for the specific sequencing, and the specific forms which the different sub-cultural formations take? There is also a question about how 'ideological' youth sub-cultures are understood as being. In some ways, the most subtle and suggestive parts of the analysis relate to the way the sub-cultures are shown to address a common class problematic, yet attempt to resolve by means of an 'imaginary relation' - i.e. ideologically - the 'real relations' they cannot otherwise transcend. This is a suggestive proposal - but also one most difficult to test and refine. The fact that men live, in ideology, an 'imaginary relation' to the real conditions of their existence is not something peculiar or limited to sub-cultures. What further things, then, provoke so highly structured, visible and tightly-bounded a response? By concentrating on the imaginary, ideological relation in which sub-cultures stand to the life of a class, the analysis may now have gone too far in the direction of reading sub-cultures 'ideologically'. Not enough account is perhaps taken of the material, economic and social conditions specific to the 'sub-cultural solution'. Despite these criticisms, the analysis remains, in our view, one of the most advanced and sophisticated of available accounts. The proposition that an 'imaginary relation' lies somewhere near the heart of the sub-cultures question is a fruitful one which - despite the problems we find in applying it concretely, we adopt and develop below.

## CLASS & SUBCULTURES: A VERSION OF COHEN'S MODEL



## E. Dominant and subordinate cultures

The immediate point is to note how class has been used by Cohen to clarify the concept of sub-culture. 'Class' does not simply replace sub-culture in a reductive way. Nor is class taken as a set of given, 'background', sociological variables. The relation between class and sub-culture has been placed in a more dynamic historical framework. The relations between classes, the experience and response to change within different class fractions, is now seen as the determining level. However, the subculture is seen as one specific kind of response, with its own meaning structure - its own "relative autonomy". Thus, the attempt to think the problem right through to the level of the social formation as a whole (where class relations are determining) is done, not by repressing but by retaining what is specific about the intermediary concept of 'sub-culture'. The social formation is not seen as a simple unity (the 'nation, 'the culture'), but as a necessarily complex, differentiated, antagonistic 'whole'. The further attempt to trace these general shifts in class relations through to their impact on particular communities, particular fractions of the class, particular local economies, is a crucial stage of that analysis.

In this section, we discuss briefly some of the broad shifts in class relations over the period as a whole, before coming to the specific question of the sub-cultures. This is a necessary first step, though, by compressing large movements into a short space, we sacrifice much of what is specific and concrete in Cohen's analysis of the East End case.

One determining level of change is the way production was reorganised and modernised in the post-war period; and the impact of this on the division of labour, on occupational cultures, on forms of working-class response, defence and resistance. The war and post-war situation accelerated changes already in train in the inter-war period. One general result was a widening of the gap between 'old' and 'new' sectors in the economy - old and new industries, old and new areas and regions. On the one hand, the 'new' industries, based on modern technical and electronic processes or tied to the consumer and export drives; on the other hand, the 'declining' industries, the legacy of the first industrial revolution. The impact of this partial and unplanned 'rationalisation', first on skills and the division of labour, secondly on the economic life of regions and areas, was profound but quite "uneven". Some areas - the South-East especially - spurred ahead; others - sometimes whole industries and regions - were impelled into a long decline. The exact shifts in the division of labour consequent on this "uneven" development, can't be charted in detail here - they remain the joker of the much-

shuffled sociological 'pack' of (mainly numerical) representations of occupational mobility. Rationalisation certainly introduced new elements of fragmentation into the labour force. It also precipitated a whole 'ideological' debate - North vs. South, the 'cloth cap' vs. the white coat, etc. - which fed straight into the 'embourgeoisement' thesis, and confused it. The East End case, discussed by Cohen, demonstrates its real impact in a striking way: new economic forces penetrating, in a highly "uneven" way, into a 'backward' sector and area. The dockers caught between the casual labour pool, the state attempts to 'rationalise' and 'modernise' dock work, and the drive for containerisation is a classic instance of "combined and uneven" development, biting into a particular locality.

What matters here is not some general idea of 'social change and the working-class' but, rather, the particular social and cultural composition of those sectors of the working-class whose concrete situation is being restructured by quite specific economic forces. Here, changes in the economic mode of production register on a particular complex of trades, skills, workshops, a particular 'mix' of occupational cultures, the specific distribution of different class strata within them. The wider economic forces then *throw out of gear* a particular working-class complex: they dismantle a set of particular internal balances and stabilities. They reshape and restructure the productive basis, which forms the material and social conditions of life, the 'givens', around which a particular local working-class culture has developed. They disturb a particular historical network of defences and 'negotiations' (again, the complex history of the formation of the 'East End' is an excellent example).

These productive relations also form the basis of the everyday life and culture of the class. Changes in housing and in the ecology of the working-class neighbourhood are part of the same pattern; and the different facets of change react on and reverberate through each other. The impact of post-war redevelopment on traditional working-class neighbourhoods seems in general to go through three broad phases. First, the break-up of traditional housing patterns by post-war re-housing: the new housing estates and new towns. The areas left behind decay; they drift downwards towards the 'urban ghetto' or 'new slum' pattern, the prey of rack-renting, speculative landlordism and multiple occupation. The drift inwards of immigrant labour highlights and compounds the ghettoising process. Then some parts of the ghettos are selectively redeveloped, through the combination of planning and speculative property development. The entry of middle class families 'up-classes' certain neighbourhoods, and "planned development" (the East End scheme is, again, a classic instance here) redefines the area towards this more 'up-graded', middle-income pattern of life. Again, these are

not simply forces working abstractly on an area. They graphically reconstruct the real material and social conditions in which working people live.

The forces restructuring the working-class neighbourhood and local economy also had a decisive impact on the structure of the family. Those pushed upwards and away in occupational terms were often also moving to estates and towns which prescribed, in their layout and design, a different, less extended, more 'nucleated' family pattern. Even estates rebuilt in or near the old areas have been constructed - more consistently, perhaps, than their pre-war counterparts - in the image of an 'ideal' family: that is, a more middle class, 'nuclear' one. The working-class family did not 'disappear' under these conditions nor did working people actively subscribe to the new 'bourgeois' domestic ideal. But the family may have become more isolated; relations between children and parents, or between peers and siblings were altered, with special effect on younger family members and on women. What, in sum, was *unsettled* was the precise position and role of the working-class family within a defensive class culture. What was disturbed was a concrete set of relations, a network of knowledge, things, experiences - the *supports* of a class culture. In these circumstances, too, the 'new' gained ground precisely because it once again invaded and undermined alternative patterns of social organisation.

In the early post-war period, these changes in the intricate mechanisms and balances of working-class life and culture were overlaid by the spectacular ideology of 'affluence'. We know now what were the limits of its real impact, its uneven distribution - even in terms of wages and consumption - for most sections of the working-class. There was no 'qualitative leap'. Indeed, 'affluence' assumed the proportions of a full-blown ideology precisely because it was required to cover over the gaps between real inequalities and the promised Utopia of equality-for-all and ever-rising-consumption to come. By projecting this ideological scenario, the 'affluence' myth aimed to give the working-classes a stake in a future which had not yet arrived, and thus to bind and cement the class to the hegemonic order. Here, precisely, the ideology of affluence reconstructed the 'real relations' of post-war British society into an 'imaginary relation'. This is the function of social myths. The myth provided, for a time, the ideological basis of the political hegemony of the 1950's. 'Affluence' was, essentially, an ideology of the dominant culture *about* and for the working-class, directed at them (through the media, advertising, political speeches, etc.). Few working-class people subscribed to a version of their own situation which so little squared with its real dimensions. What mattered, therefore, was *not* the passive re-making of the working class in the 'affluent' image, but the *dislocations* it produced - and the responses it provoked.



The full absorption of the Labour Party into its parliamentary-electoral role within the state (the completion of a long historical trajectory) and the partial incorporation into the state apparatus of the trade unions, on the back of an 'affluent' reading of the post-war situation, had real political consequences for the working-class, dismantled real defences. Other responses were unpredictable and unintended. The overwhelming emphasis in the ideology of affluence on money and consumption may well have had the unintended effect of stimulating an awareness of 'relative deprivation' and thereby contributed to the 'wage militancy' of the 1960's and 70's. The affluent workers in engineering and the motor firms pioneered the shift to work-place power, plant bargaining, shop stewards organisation and 'wage drift' - a militant 'economism' which lasted right into the period of inflation and recession, pulling the 'revolt of the lower paid' behind it. These, too, were responses to 'affluence' which its ideologues neither did nor could foresee.

To locate youth sub-culture in this kind of analysis, we must first situate youth in the dialectic between a 'hegemonic' dominant culture and the subordinate working-class 'parent' culture, of which youth is a fraction. These terms - hegemonic/corporate, dominant/subordinate - are crucial for the analysis, but need further elaboration before the sub-cultural dimension can be introduced. Gramsci used the term "hegemony" to refer to the moment when a ruling class is able, not only to coerce a subordinate class to conform to its interests, but to exert a "hegemony" or "total social authority" over subordinate classes. This involves the exercise of a special kind of power - the power to frame alternatives and contain opportunities, to win and shape consent, so that the granting of legitimacy to the dominant classes appears not only 'spontaneous' but natural and normal. Lukes has recently defined this as the power to define the agenda, to shape preferences, to "prevent conflict from arising in the first place", or to contain conflict when it does arise by defining what sorts of resolution are 'reasonable' and 'realistic' - i.e. within the existing framework (Lukes, 1974: 23-24). The terrain on which this hegemony is won or lost is the terrain of the superstructures; the institutions of civil society and the state - what Althusser (1971) and Poulantzas (1973), somewhat misleadingly, call "ideological state apparatuses". Conflicts of interest arise, fundamentally, from the difference in the structural position of the classes in the productive realm: but they 'have their effect' in social and political life. Politics, in the widest sense, frames the passage from the first level to the second. The terrain of civil and state institutions thus becomes essentially "the stake, but also the site of class struggle" (Althusser 1971). In part, these apparatuses work 'by ideology'. That is, the definitions of reality institutionalised within these apparatuses come to

constitute a lived 'reality as such' for the subordinate classes - that, at least, is what hegemony attempts and secures. Gramsci, using the example of the church, says that it preserves "the ideological unity of the entire social bloc which that ideology serves to cement and unify" (Gramsci, 1971: 328). A hegemonic cultural order tries to frame all competing definitions of the world within its range. It provides the horizon of thought and action within which conflicts are fought through, appropriated (i.e. experienced), obscured (i.e. concealed as a "national interest" which should unite all conflicting parties) or contained (i.e. settled to the profit of the ruling class). A hegemonic order prescribes, not the specific content of ideas, but the limits within which ideas and conflicts move and are resolved. Hegemony always rests on force and coercion, but "the normal exercise of hegemony on the now classical terrain of the parliamentary regime is characterised by the combination of force and consent ... without force predominating excessively over consent" (Gramsci 1971: 80). Hegemony thus provides the base line and the base-structures of legitimation for ruling class power.

Hegemony works through ideology, but it does not consist of false ideas, perceptions, definitions. It works primarily by inserting the subordinate class into the key institutions and structures which support the power and social authority of the dominant order. It is, above all, in these structures and relations that a subordinate class lives its subordination. Often, this subordination is secured only because the dominant order succeeds in weakening, destroying, displacing or incorporating alternative institutions of defence and resistance thrown up by the subordinate class. Gramsci insists, quite correctly, that "the thesis which asserts that men become conscious of fundamental conflicts on the level of ideology is not psychological or moralistic in character but structural and epistemological." (Our italics; Gramsci, 1971: 164.)

Hegemony can rarely be sustained by one, single class stratum. Almost always it requires an alliance of ruling-class fractions - a 'historical bloc'. The content of hegemony will be determined, in part, by precisely which class fractions compose such a 'hegemonic bloc', and thus what interests have to be taken into account within it. Hegemony is not simple 'class rule'. It requires to some degree the 'consent' of the subordinate class, which has, in turn, to be won and secured; thus, an ascendancy of social authority, not only in the state but in civil society as well, in culture and ideology. Hegemony prevails when ruling classes not only rule or 'direct' but lead. The state is a major educative force in this process. It educates through its regulation of the life of the subordinate classes. These apparatuses reproduce class relations, and thus class subordination (the family, the school, the church and cultural institutions, as well as the law, the police and the army, the courts).

The struggle against class hegemony also takes place within these institutions, as well as outside them - they become the "site" of class struggle. But the apparatuses also depend on the operation of "a set of predominant values, beliefs, rituals and institutional procedures ('rules of the game') that operate systematically and consistently to the benefit of certain persons and groups" (Bacrach and Baratz, 1962):

Gramsci believes that, in the Italian state, the dominant classes had frequently ruled without that 'natural social authority' which would make them 'hegemonic'. So hegemony cannot be taken for granted - either by the state and the dominant classes, or, for that matter, by the analyst. The current use of the term, to suggest the unending and unproblematic exercise of class power by every ruling class, and its opposite - the permanent and finished incorporation of the subordinate class - is quite false to Gramsci's usage. It limits the historical specificity of the concept. To make that point concrete: we would argue that, though the dominant classes remained massively in command during the 1930's, it is difficult to define them as 'hegemonic'. Economic crisis and unemployment disciplined, rather than 'led', the working classes into subordination in this period. The defeats suffered by the labour movement in the 1920's powerfully contributed to the coercive sway of the former over the latter. By contrast, the 1950's seem to us a period of true 'hegemonic domination', it being precisely the role of 'affluence', as an ideology, to dismantle working-class resistance and deliver the 'spontaneous consent' of the class to the authority of the dominant classes. Increasingly, in the 1960's, and more openly in the 1970's, this 'leadership' has again been undermined. The society has polarised, conflict has reappeared on many levels. The dominant classes retain power, but their 'repertoire' of control is progressively challenged, weakened, exhausted. One of the most striking features of this later period is the shift in the exercise of control from the mechanisms of consent to those of coercion (e.g. the use of the law, the courts, the police and the army, of legal repression, conspiracy charges and of force to contain an escalating threat to the state and to 'law and order'). This marks a crisis in the hegemony of the ruling class.

Hegemony, then, is not universal and 'given' to the continuing rule of a particular class. It has to be won, worked for, reproduced, sustained. Hegemony is, as Gramsci said, a "moving equilibrium", containing "relations of forces favourable or unfavourable to this or that tendency". It is a matter of the nature of the balance struck between contending classes: the compromises made to sustain it; the relations of force; the solutions adopted. Its character and content can only be established by looking at concrete situations, at concrete

historical moments. The idea of 'permanent class hegemony', or of 'permanent incorporation' must be ditched.

In relation to the hegemony of a ruling class, the working-class is, by definition, a subordinate social and cultural formation. Capitalist production, Marx suggested, reproduces capital and labour in their ever-antagonistic forms. The role of hegemony is to ensure that, in the social relations between the classes, each class is continually reproduced in its existing dominant-or-subordinate form. Hegemony can never wholly and absolutely absorb the working-class into the dominant order. Society may seem to be, but cannot actually ever be, in the capitalist mode of production, 'one-dimensional'. Of course, at times, hegemony is strong and cohesive, and the subordinate class is weak, vulnerable and exposed. But it cannot, by definition, disappear. It remains, as a subordinate structure, often separate and impermeable, yet still contained by the overall rule and domination of the ruling class. The subordinate class has developed its own corporate culture, its own forms of social relationship, its characteristic institutions, values, modes of life. Class conflict never disappears. English working-class culture is a peculiarly strong, densely-impacted, cohesive and defensive structure of this corporate kind. Class conflict, then, is rooted and embodied in this culture: it cannot 'disappear' - contrary to the ideology of affluence - until the productive relations which produce and sustain it disappear. But it can be more or less open, more or less formal, more or less institutionalised, more or less autonomous. The period between the 1880's and the present shows, not a single thrust towards incorporation but a marked alternating rhythm. It is important to insist that, even when class conflict is most institutionalised, it remains as one of the fundamental base-rhythms of the society.

In old and developed industrial capitalist societies, like Britain, the culture is in fact covered by a network of what we might call 'institutional solutions', which structure how the dominant and subordinate cultures coexist, survive, but also struggle, with one another inside the same social formation. Many of these institutions preserve the corporate culture of the subordinate class, but also negotiate its relations with the dominant culture. These are the 'negotiated' aspects of a subordinate class culture. In work, for example, the line between workers interests and managerial power, though often blurred and overlaid by intermediary structures, never disappears. But it can be very differently handled, by each side, from one workplace to another, or from one historical moment to another. The informal culture of the workplace, the attempts to exercise day-to-day control over the work process, the bargaining around wage minimums from place to place, as well as the 'down-tools',

the walk-out, the strike, the official dispute, the factory occupation, constitute a whole repertoire of working-class responses to the immediate power and authority of management and capital. They are types of counter-hegemonic power. Many of these strategies - in so far as they do not finally replace the power of capital over labour - continue to define labour as a corporate - but not as an incorporated - part of capitalist production. They represent a line of defence of the class, even where these defences operate within the over-determining framework of managerial power.

Working-class culture has consistently 'won space' from the dominant culture. Many working-class institutions represent the different outcomes of this intense kind of 'negotiation' over long periods. At times, these institutions are adaptive; at other times, combative. Their class identity and position is never finally 'settled': the balance of forces within them remains open. They form the basis of what Parkin has called a "negotiated version" of the dominant system ... dominant values are not so much rejected or opposed as modified by the subordinate class as a result of circumstances and restricted opportunities." ... (Parkin, 1971: 92). Often, such 'negotiated solutions' prevail, not because the class is passive and deferential to ruling class ideas, but because its perspectives are bounded and contained by immediate practical concerns or limited to concrete situations. (This is the material basis and 'rational core' of working-class 'economism'.) From this arise the situated solutions to problems arising at a wider, more global, level, beyond the immediate class horizon. In situations where "purely abstract evaluations are called for, the dominant value system will provide the moral frame of reference; but in concrete social situations involving choice and action, the negotiated version - or subordinate value system - will provide the moral framework" (Parkin, 1971: 93). Authority, enshrined in the major institutional orders of society (e.g. the rule of the Law) may be accepted at an abstract level, but much more ambivalently handled at the face-to-face level (e.g. attitudes to the police). English working-class culture is massively orchestrated around attitudes of 'Us' and 'Them', even when this structured difference does not lead directly to counter-hegemonic strategies by the working-class. Recent evidence suggests that the suspicion of property and property rights remains deeply entrenched in the class, despite the absence of any concerted thrust to abolish property relations as such (Moorhouse and Chamberlain, 1974). Even class institutions like the trade unions, which in this period were pulled a considerable distance into full collaboration with the state, nevertheless, under slightly different circumstances (legislation against fundamental trade union rights and procedures after 1970 by a Conservative Government, for example) emerged as reluctant defenders of basic working

class rights (Lane, 1974). Thus, in 'good' times as well as 'bad', contrary cultural definitions are always in play. These reflect the structural difference between the material position, outlook and everyday life-experience of the different classes. These discrepancies (contradictions) in situation, values and action then provide the real material and historical basis - under the right conditions - for more developed class strategies of open resistance, struggle, and for counter-hegemonic strategies of rupture and transformation. The convergence of these various strategies of negotiation by a subordinate class into a more sustained class politics requires, of course, mobilisation, politicisation and organisation. It is precisely to this distinction that Marx addressed his observations about the movement from a class 'in itself' to a class 'for itself'.

The working-class neighbourhood, which assumes its 'traditional' form in and after the 1880's, represents one, distinctive example of the outcome of negotiation between the classes. In it, the different strata of the working-class have won space for their own forms of life. The values of this corporate culture are registered everywhere, in material and social forms, in the shapes and uses of things, in patterns of recreation and leisure, in the relations between people and the character of communal spaces. These spaces are both physical (the networks of streets, houses, corner shops, pubs and parks) and social (the networks of kin, friendship, work and neighbourly relationships). Over such spaces, the class has come to exert those 'informal social controls' which redefine and reappropriate them for the groups which live in them: a web of rights and obligations, intimacies and distances, embodying in its real textures and structures "the sense of solidarity... local loyalties and traditions" (Cohen, 1972). These are the 'rights', not of ownership or force, but of territorial and cultural possession, the customary occupation of the 'sitting tenant'. The institutions are, of course, cross-cut and penetrated by outside forces. The structure of work and workplace, near or far, link the local labour force to wider economic forces and movements. Not far away are the bustling commercial high streets, with their chain stores and supermarkets, linking the home to the wider economy through trade and consumption. Through these structures, the neighbourhood is socially and economically bounded. At one level - the horizontal - are all those ties which bind spaces and institutions to locality, neighbourhood, local culture and tradition. At another level - the vertical - are those structures which tie them to dominant institutions and cultures.

The local school is a classic instance of such 'double-binding' (Hall, 1974a: 49-55). It is the local school, next to houses, streets and shops where generations of working-class children have been 'schooled', and where ties of friendship,

peer-group and marriage are forged and unmade. Yet, in terms of vertical relationships, the school has stood for kinds of learning, types of discipline and authority relations, affirmed experiences quite at variance with the local culture. Its selective mechanisms of streaming, 'tracking', eleven-plus, its knowledge boundaries, its intolerance of language and experience outside the range of formal education, link the urban working-class locality to the wider world of education and occupations in ways which are connective but also, crucially, *disconnective*. It remains a classic, negotiated, or mediated class institution. In this context, we can begin to look again and assess differently the varying strategies, options and 'solutions' which develop in relation to it: the 'scholarship' boy or girl; the 'ordinary, average-ability' kids; the 'trouble-makers'; truants and absentees; the educationally-and-emotionally 'deprived'; the actively mis-educated (e.g. E.S.N-ed black kids). Similarly, in relation to the leisure activities of the young, to peer-group culture and association, we must recognise the 'mix' of resistance and accommodation in, for example: street-corner culture, with its massively 'masculine' focus; the near-delinquent group or exploit; the Boys Brigade addict; the 'gang'; the 'football end'; the well-defined sub-culture; and so on.

Any one of these strategies in the repertoire developed by young working-class boys will stand in a complex relation to that of other 'peers'; to 'adult' strategies and solutions; to alternative positions in the same age spectrum (e.g. Skinheads vs. hippies); and to the dominant culture and its repertoire of control. The strength or absence of any of these strategies at a historical moment will depend in part on the historical conjuncture (the balance of forces between domination and subordination; the stable or changing situation of the 'parent' class, etc.). It will especially produce changes in the 'problematic' of the class - that matrix of problems, structures, opportunities and experiences which confront that particular class stratum at a particular historical moment. It will mirror changes in the material conditions in everyday life available for construction into the *supports* for one or other of the collective strategies.

Negotiation, resistance, struggle: the relations between a subordinate and a dominant culture, wherever they fall within this spectrum, are always intensely active, always oppositional, in a structural sense (even when this opposition is latent, or experienced simply as the normal state of affairs - what Gouldner called "normalised repression"). Their outcome is not given but *made*. The subordinate class brings to this 'theatre of struggle' a repertoire of strategies and responses - ways of coping as well as of resisting. Each strategy in the repertoire mobilises certain real material and social elements: it constructs these into the supports for the different ways the class

lives and resists its continuing subordination. Not all the strategies are of equal weight: not all are potentially counter-hegemonic. Some may even be alternatives - e.g. working-class politics and certain kinds of working class crime. We must also recognise that a developed and organised revolutionary working-class consciousness is only *one*, among many such possible responses, and a very special ruptural one at that. It has been misleading to try to measure the whole 'spectrum' of strategies in the class in terms of this one ascribed form of consciousness, and to define everything else as a token of incorporation. This is to impose an abstract scheme on to a concrete historical reality. We must try to understand, instead, how, under what conditions, the class has been able to use its material and cultural 'raw materials' to construct a whole range of responses. Some - the repertoire of resistance specific to the history of one working class - form an immense reservoir of knowledge and power in the struggle of the class to survive and 'win space'. Even those which appear again and again in the history of the class, are not fixed alternatives (reform vs. revolution), but *potential* historical 'spaces' used and adapted to very different circumstances in its tradition of struggle. Nor can we ascribe particular sociological strata of the class to particular, permanent positions in the repertoire. This, too, is quite a-historical. It is possible for the 'labour aristocracy' to provide critical radical leadership; for the unorganised or so-called 'lumpen' to organize; for 'deference voters' to lose their respect for authority; for 'affluents' to be, also, 'militants'; for 'clericals' to strike; for working wives and first generation immigrants to take the vanguard position; and so on. In the diagram below, we have tried to enforce this argument (which, we believe follows directly from Gramsci's conception of hegemony and corporateness) by a sketch of one possible part of the strategies of negotiation, conflict and subordination. It is offered for illustrative purposes only - its value lying in the fact that it includes, within one typology, strategies which belong to the more or less adaptive poles of the spectrum, strategies developed both within and outside the formal institutionalisation of class struggle.

## F. The subcultural response

We can return, now, to the question of 'sub-cultures'. Working-class sub cultures, we suggested, take shape on the level of the social and cultural class-relations of the subordinate classes. In themselves, they are *not* simply 'ideological' constructs. They, too, *win space* for the young: cultural space in the neighbourhood and institutions, real time for leisure and recreation, actual room on the street or street-corner. They serve to mark out and appropriate 'territory' in the localities. They focus around key occasions of social interaction: the week-

"the naturally Conservative Nation"	deference vote	Working Class Tory	"one nation"	"the two sides of industry"	"the parliamentary road"	"equality before the law"	"militancy" "extremism" "holding the nation to ransom"	"subversion" "anarchy"
	w.c. neighbourhood	'Us' vs. 'Them'	Trade Union Membership	Trade Union Consciousness	Labour Vote	'the Law'	shop steward power	the Left sects
								Revolutionary Politics

("false consciousness") ... ("normalized repression") .. (ab-normal responses). (threats to state)

A REPERTOIRE OF NEGOTIATIONS AND RESPONSES

end, the disco, the bank-holiday trip, the night out in the 'centre', the 'standing-about-doing-nothing' of the weekday evening, the Saturday match. They cluster around particular locations. They develop specific rhythms of interchange, structured relations between members: younger to older, experienced to novice, stylish to square. They explore 'focal concerns' central to the inner life of the group: things always 'done' or 'never done', a set of social rituals which underpin their collective identity and define them as a 'group' instead of a mere collection of individuals. They adopt and adapt material objects - goods and possessions - and reorganise them into distinctive 'styles' which express the collectivity of their being-as-a-group. These concerns, activities, relationships, materials become embodied in rituals of relationship and occasion and movement. Sometimes, the world is marked out, linguistically, by names or an argot which classifies the social world exterior to them in terms meaningful only within their group perspective, and maintains its boundaries. This also helps them to develop, ahead of immediate activities a perspective on the immediate future - plans, projects, things to do to fill out time, exploits ... They too are concrete, identifiable social formations constructed as a collective response to the material and situated experience of their class.

Though not 'ideological', sub-cultures have an ideological dimension: and, in the problematic situation of the post-war period, this ideological component became more prominent. In addressing the 'class problematic' of the particular strata from which they were drawn, the different sub-cultures provided for a section of working-class youth (mainly boys) one strategy for negotiating their collective existence. But their highly ritualised and stylised form suggests that they were also attempts at a solution to that problematic experience: a resolution which, because pitched largely at the symbolic level, was fated to fail. The problematic of a subordinate class experience can be 'lived through', negotiated or resisted; but it cannot be resolved at that level or by those means. There is no 'sub-cultural career' for the working-class lad, no 'solution' in the sub-cultural milieu, for problems posed by the key structuring experiences of the class.

There is no 'subcultural solution' to working-class youth unemployment, educational disadvantage, compulsory miseducation, dead-end jobs, the routinisation and specialisation of labour, low pay and the loss of skills. Sub-cultural strategies cannot match, meet or answer the structuring dimensions emerging in this period for the class as a whole. So, when the post-war sub-cultures address the problematics of their class experience, they often do so in ways which reproduce the gaps and discrepancies between real negotiations and symbolically displaced 'resolutions'. They 'solve', but in an imaginary way, problems

which at the concrete material level remain unresolved. Thus the 'Teddy Boy' expropriation of an upper class style of dress 'covers' the gap between largely manual, unskilled, near-lumpen real careers and life-chances, and the 'all-dressed-up-and-nowhere-to-go' experience of Saturday evening. Thus, in the expropriation and fetishisation of consumption and style itself, the 'Mods' cover for the gap between the never-ending-weekend and Monday's resumption of boring, dead-end work. Thus, in the resurrection of an archetypal and 'symbolic' (but, in fact, anachronistic) form of working-class dress, in the displaced focussing on the football match and the 'occupation' of the football 'ends', Skinheads reassert, but 'imaginarily', the values of a class, the essence of a style, a kind of 'fan-ship' to which few working-class adults any longer subscribe: they 're-present' a sense of territory and locality which the planners and speculators are rapidly destroying: they 'declare' as alive and well a game which is being commercialised, professionalised and spectacularised. "Skins Rule, OK". OK? But "in ideology, men do indeed express, not the real relation between them and their conditions of existence, but the way they live the relation between them and the conditions of their existence; this presupposes both a real and an 'imaginary', 'lived' relation. Ideology then, is ... the (over determined) unity of the real relation and the imaginary relation ... that expresses a will ... a hope, or a nostalgia, rather than describing a reality" (Althusser, 1969: 233-234).

Working-class sub-cultures are a response to a problematic which youth shares with other members of the 'parent' class culture. But class structures the adolescent's experience of that problematic in distinctive ways. First, it locates the young, at a formative stage of their development, in a particular material and cultural milieu, in distinctive relations and experiences. These provide the essential cultural frame-works through which that problematic is made sense of by the youth. This 'socialisation' of youth into a class identity and position operates particularly through two 'informal' agencies: family and neighbourhood. Family and neighbourhood are the specific structures which form, as well as frame, youth's early passage into a class. For example, the sex-typing roles and responsibilities characteristic of a class are reproduced, not only through language and talk in the family, but through daily interaction and example. In the neighbourhood, patterns of community sociality are embedded partly through the structure of interactions between older and younger kids. (Howard Parker, 1974, has commented on the role of street football as a way in which younger kids 'learn' a distinctive kind of class sociability.) These intimate contexts also refer the young to the larger world outside. Thus it is largely through friends and relations that

the distant but increasingly imminent worlds of work or of face-to-face authority (the rent man, Council officials, social security, the police) are appropriated. Through these formative networks, relations, distances, interactions, orientations to the wider world and its social types are delineated and reproduced in the young.

Class also, broadly, structures the young individual's life-chances. It determines, in terms of statistical class probabilities, the distribution of 'achievement' and 'failure'. It establishes certain crucial orientations towards careers in education and work - it produces the notoriously 'realistic' expectations of working-class kids about future opportunities. It teaches ways of relating to and negotiating authority. For example, the social distance, deference, anxiety and dressing-up of parents in meetings with school teachers may confirm or reinforce the experience of school as essentially part of an alien and external world.

These are only some of the many ways in which the way youth is inserted within the culture of a class also serves to reproduce, within the young, the problematics of that class. But, over and above these shared class situations, there remains something privileged about the specifically *generational experience* of the young. Fundamentally, this is due to the fact that youth encounters the problematic of its class culture in *different sets of institutions and experiences* from those of its parents; and when youth encounters the same structures, it encounters them at *crucially different points* in its biographical careers.

We can identify these aspects of "generational specificity" in relation to the three main life areas we pointed to earlier: education, work and leisure. Between the ages of five and sixteen, education is the institutional sphere which has the most sustained and intensive impact on the lives of the young. It is the "paramount reality" imposing itself on experience, not least through the fact that it cannot (easily) be avoided. By contrast, the older members of the class encounter education in various *indirect* and distanced ways: through remembered experiences ("things have changed" nowadays); through special mediating occasions - parents' evenings, etc.; and through the interpretations the young give of their school experiences.

In the area of work, the difference is perhaps less obvious, in that both young and old alike are facing similar institutional arrangements, organisations and occupational situations. But within this crucial differences remain. The young face the problem of choosing and entering jobs, of learning both the formal and informal cultures of work - the whole difficult transition from school to work. We have already observed how the

changing occupational structures of some areas and industries may dislocate the traditionally evolved "family work - career structure" - thus making the transition even more difficult. For the older members of the class, work has become a relatively routine aspect of life; they have learnt occupational identities and the cultures of work, involving strategies for coping with the problems that work poses - methods of "getting by".

In the broader context, the young are likely to be more vulnerable to the consequence of increasing unemployment than are older workers: in the unemployment statistics of the late sixties, unskilled school leavers were twice as likely to be unemployed as were older, unskilled workers. In addition, the fact of unemployment is likely to be differentially experienced at different stages in the occupational "career".

Finally, leisure must be seen as a significant life-area for the class. As Marx observed,

..... The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He is at home when he is not working, and when he is working he is not at home. His labour is therefore not voluntary but coerced; it is forced labour. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely the means to satisfy needs external to it.

(1964: 110-1)

In working-class leisure, we see many of the results of that "warrenning" of society by the working-class discussed above. Leisure and recreation seem to have provided a more negotiable space than the tightly-disciplined and controlled work situation. The working-class has imprinted itself indelibly on many areas of mass leisure and recreation. These form an important part of the corporate culture and are central to the experience and cultural identity of the whole class. Nevertheless, there are major differences in the ways working-class adults and young people experience and regard leisure. This difference became intensified in the 1950's and 1960's, with the growth of the 'teenage consumer' and the reorganisation of consumption and leisure provision (both commercial and non-commercial) in favour of a range of goods and services specifically designed to attract a youthful clientele. This widespread availability and high visibility of Youth Culture structured the leisure sphere in crucially different ways for the young. The equation of youth with consumption and leisure rearranged and intensified certain long-standing parent culture orientations; for example, towards the special and privileged meaning of 'freetime', and towards 'youth' as a period for 'having a good time while you can' - the 'last fling'. This reshaping of attitudes from within the class, in conjunction with pressures to rearrange and redistribute the patterns of leisure for the young from outside, served to highlight - indeed to fetishise - the meaning of

leisure for the young. Thus, not only did youth encounter leisure in different characteristic institutions from their parents (cafs, discos, youth clubs, 'all nighters', etc.): these institutions powerfully presented themselves to the young as different from the past, partly because they were so uncompromisingly youthful.

Here we begin to see how forces, working right across a class, but differentially experienced as between the generations, may have formed the basis for generating an outlook - a kind of consciousness - specific to age position: a *generational consciousness*. We can also see exactly why this 'consciousness', though formed by class situation and the forces working in it, may nevertheless have taken the form of a consciousness apparently separate from, unrelated to, indeed, able to be set over against, its class content and context. Though we can see how and why this specific kind of 'generational consciousness' might arise, the problem is not resolved by simply reading it once again out of existence - that is, by re-assigning to youth a clear and simple class-based identity and consciousness. This would be simply to over-react against 'generational consciousness'. We have suggested that, though a fully-blown 'generational consciousness' served unwittingly to repress and obscure the class dimension, it did have a 'rational core' in the very experience of the working-class young in the period; the specificity of the institutions in which post-war changes were encountered, and above all, in the way this sphere was reshaped by changes in the leisure market. It may also have been located in other, material experiences of the youth of the class in this period. A 'generational consciousness' is likely to be strong among those sectors of youth which are upwardly and outwardly mobile from the working-class - e.g. Hoggart's 'scholarship boy'. Occupational and educational change in this period led to an increase in these paths of limited mobility. The upward path, through education, leads to a special focussing on the school and the education system as the main mechanism of advancement: it is this which 'makes the difference' between parents who stay where they were and children who move on and up. It involves the young person valuing the dominant culture positively, and sacrificing the 'parent' culture - even where this is accompanied by a distinct sense of cultural disorientation. His experience and self-identity will be based around mobility - something specific to his generation, rather than to the over-determining power of class. One of the things which supports this taking-over of a 'generational consciousness' by the scholarship boy is, precisely, his cultural isolation - the fact that his career is different from the majority of his peers. The peer group is, of course, one of the real and continuing bases for collective identities organised around the focus of 'generation'. But a sense of generational distinctness may also flow from an individual's isolation from the typical



involvement in kinds of peer-group activities which, though specific to youth, are clearly understood as forming a sort of cultural apprenticeship to the 'parent' class culture. This kind of isolation may be the result of biographical factors - e.g. inability to enter the local football game where football is the primary activity of the peer group; or being a member of a relatively 'closed' and tight family situation. A young person, who for whatever reasons, fails to go through this class-culture apprenticeship, may be more vulnerable to the vicarious peer-group experience provided by the highly visible and widely accessible commercially provided Youth Culture, where the audience as a whole substitutes for the real peer group as one, vast, symbolic 'peer group': "Our Generation".

'Generational consciousness' thus has roots in the real experience of working-class youth as a whole. But it took a peculiarly intense form in the post-war sub-cultures which were sharply demarcated - amongst other factors - by age and generation. Youth felt and experienced itself as 'different', especially when this difference was inscribed in activities and interests to which 'age', principally, provided the passport. This does not necessarily mean that a 'sense of class' was thereby obliterated. Skinheads, for example, are clearly both 'generationally' and 'class' conscious. As Cohen suggested, "sub-culture is ... a compromise solution, between two contradictory needs: the need to create and express *autonomy and difference* from parents ... and the need to maintain ... the *parental identifications* which support them" (Cohen: 1972: 26). It is to the formation of these generationally distinct working-class sub-cultures that we next turn.

### G. Sources of style

The question of style, indeed, of generational style, is pivotal to the post-war formation of these youth sub-cultures. (The issue is treated at length below in the essay on "Style"; the main points only are summarised at this point.) What concerns us here is, first, how 'class' and 'generational' elements interact together in the production of distinctive group-styles; second, how the materials available to the group are constructed and appropriated in the form of a visibly organised cultural response.

Working-class youth inhabit, like their parents, a distinctive structural and cultural *milieu* defined by territory, objects and things, relations, institutional and social practices. In terms of kinship, friendship networks, the informal culture of the neighbourhood, and the practices articulated around them, the young are already located in and by the 'parent' culture. They also encounter the dominant culture, not in its distant, remote, powerful, abstract forms, but in the located forms and institut-

ions which mediate the dominant culture to the subordinate culture, and thus permeate it. Here, for youth, the school, work (from Saturday jobs onwards), leisure are the key institutions. Of almost equal importance - for youth above all - are the institutions and agencies of public social control: the school serves this function, but alongside it, a range of institutions from the 'hard' coercive ones, like the police, to the 'softer' variants - youth and social workers.

It is at the intersection between the located parent culture and the mediating institutions of the dominant culture that youth sub-cultures arise. Many forms of adaptation, negotiation and resistance, elaborated by the 'parent' culture in its encounter with the dominant culture, are borrowed and adapted by the young in their encounter with the mediating institutions of provision and control. In organising their response to these experiences, working-class youth sub-cultures take some things principally from the located 'parent' culture: but they apply and transform them to the situations and experiences characteristic of their own distinctive group-life and generational experience. Even where youth sub-cultures have seemed most distinctive, different, stylistically marked out from adults and other peer-group members of their 'parent' culture, they develop certain distinctive outlooks which have been, clearly, structured by the parent culture. We might think here of the recurrent organisation around collective activities ('group mindedness'); or the stress on 'territoriality' (to be seen in both the Teddy Boys and Skinheads); or the particular conceptions of masculinity and of male dominance (reproduced in all the post-war youth sub-cultures). The 'parent' culture helps to define these broad, historically-located 'focal concerns'. Certain themes which are key to the 'parent culture' are reproduced at this level again and again in the sub-cultures, even when they set out to be, or are seen as, 'different'.

But there are also 'focal concerns' more immediate, conjunctural, specific to 'youth' and its situation and activities. On the whole, the literature on post-war sub-culture has neglected the first aspect (what is shared with the 'parent' culture) and over emphasised what is distinct (the 'focal concerns' of the youth groups). But, this second element - which is, again, generationally very specific - must be taken seriously in any account. It consists both of the materials available to the group for the construction of subcultural identities (dress, music, talk), and of their contexts (activities, exploits, places, cabs, dance halls, day-trips, evenings-out, football games, etc.). Journalistic treatments, especially, have tended to isolate *things*, at the expense of their use, how they are borrowed and transformed, the activities and spaces through which they are 'set in motion', the group identities and outlooks which imprint



a style on things and objects. While taking seriously the significance of objects and things for a sub-culture, it must be part of our analysis to de-fetishise them.

The various youth sub-cultures have been identified by their possessions and objects: the boot-lace tie and velvet-collared drape jacket of the Ted, the close crop, parker coats and scooter of the Mod, the stained jeans, swastikas and ornamented motorcycles of the bike-boys, the bovver boots and skinned-head of the Skinhead, the Chicago suits or glitter costumes of the Bowieites, etc. Yet, despite their visibility, things simply appropriated and worn (or listened to) do not make a style. What makes a style is the activity of stylisation - the active organisation of objects with activities and outlooks, which produce an organised group-identity in the form and shape of a coherent and distinctive way of 'being-in-the-world'. Phil Cohen, for example, has tried to shift the emphasis away from things to the *modes* of symbolic construction through which style is generated in the sub-cultures. He identified four modes for the generation of the sub-cultural style: dress, music, ritual and argot. Whilst not wanting to limit the 'symbolic systems' to these particular four, and finding it difficult to accept the distinction (between less and more 'plastic') which he makes, we find this emphasis on group generation far preferable to the instant stereotyped association between commodity-objects and groups common in journalistic usage.

Working-class sub-cultures could not have existed without a real economic base: the growth in money wages in the 'affluent' period, but, more important, the fact that incomes grew more rapidly for teenagers than for adults in the working-class, and that much of this was 'disposable income' (income available for leisure and non-compulsory spending). But income, alone, does not make a style either. The sub-cultures could not have existed without the growth of a consumer market specifically geared to youth. The new youth industries provided the raw materials, the goods: but they did not, and when they tried failed to, produce many very authentic or sustained 'styles' in the deeper sense. The objects were there, available, but were used by the groups in the construction of distinctive styles. But this meant, not simply picking them up, but actively constructing a specific selection of things and goods into a style. And this frequently involved (as we try to show in some of the selections in our 'ethnographic' section) subverting and transforming these things, from their given meaning and use, to other meanings and uses. All commodities have a social use and thus a cultural meaning. We have only to look at the language of commodities - advertising - where, as Barthes observes, there is no such thing as a simple 'sweater': there is only a 'sweater

for autumnal walks in the wood' or a sweater for 'relaxing at home on Sundays', or a sweater for 'casual wear', and so on (Barthes, 1971). Commodities are, also, cultural signs. They have already been invested, by the dominant culture, with meanings, associations, social connotations. Many of these meanings seem fixed and 'natural'. But this is only because the dominant culture has so fully appropriated them to its use, that the meanings which it attributes to the commodities have come to appear as the only meaning which they can express. In fact, in cultural systems, there is no 'natural' meaning as such. Objects and commodities do not mean any one thing. They 'mean' only because they have already been arranged, according to social use, into cultural codes of meaning, which assign meanings to them. The bowler hat, pin-stripe suit and rolled umbrella do not, in themselves, mean 'sobriety', 'respectability', bourgeois-man-at-work. But so powerful is the social code which surround these commodities that it would be difficult for a working-class lad to turn up for work dressed like that without, either, aspiring to a 'bourgeois' image or clearly seeming to take the piss out of the image. This trivial example shows that it is possible to expropriate, as well as to appropriate, the social meanings which they seem 'naturally' to have: or, by combining them with something else (the pin-stripe suit with brilliant red socks or white running shoes, for example), to change or inflect their meaning. Because the meanings which commodities express are socially given - Marx called commodities "social hieroglyphs" - their meaning can also be socially altered or reconstructed. The interior of the working-class home, as described, say, by Roberts (1971) or Hoggart (1958), represents one such 'reworking', by means of which things are imprinted with new meanings, associations and values which expropriate them from the world which provides them and relocates them within the culture of the working-class.

Working-class youth needed money to spend on expressive goods, objects and activities - the post-war consumer market had a clear economic infrastructure. But neither money nor the market could fully dictate what groups used these things to say or signify about themselves. This re-signification was achieved by many different means. One way was to inflect 'given' meanings by combining things borrowed from one system of meanings into a different code, generated by the sub-culture itself, and through sub-cultural use. Another way was to modify, by addition, things which had been produced or used by a different social group (e.g. the Teddy Boy modifications of Edwardian dress, discussed by Tony Jefferson, below). Another was to intensify or exaggerate or isolate a given meaning and so change it (the 'fetishising' of consumption and appearance by the Mods, discussed by Dick Hebdige; or the elongation of the

pointed winkle-picker shoes of the Italian style; or the current 'massification' of the wedge-shapes borrowed from the 1940's). Yet another way was to combine forms according to a 'secret' language or code, to which only members of the group possessed the key (e.g. the argot of many sub-cultural and deviant groups; the 'Rasta' language of black 'Rudies'). These are only some of the many ways in which the sub-cultures used the materials and commodities of the 'youth market' to construct meaningful styles and appearances for themselves.

Far more important were the aspects of group life which these appropriated objects and things were made to reflect, express and resonate. It is this reciprocal effect, between the things a group uses and the outlooks and activities which structure and define their use, which is the generative principle of stylistic creation in a sub-culture. This involves members of a group in the appropriation of particular objects which are, or can be made, 'homologous' with their focal concerns, activities, group structure and collective self-image - objects in which they can see their central values held and reflected. (This is discussed more fully below, in the paper on 'Style')<sup>1</sup>. The adoption by Skinheads of boots and short jeans and shaved hair was 'meaningful' in terms of the sub-culture only because these external manifestations resonated with and articulated Skinhead conceptions of masculinity, 'hardness' and 'working-classness'. This meant overcoming or negotiating or, even, taking over in a positive way many of the negative meanings which, in the dominant cultural code, attached to these things: the 'prison-crop' image of the shaved head, the work-image, the so-called 'outdated cloth-cap image', and so on. The new meanings emerge because the 'bits' which had been borrowed or revived were brought together into a new and distinctive stylistic ensemble: but also because the symbolic objects - dress, appearance, language, ritual occasions, styles of interaction, music - were made to form a unity with the group's relations, situation, experiences: the crystallisation in an expressive form, which then defines the group's public identity. The symbolic aspects cannot, then, be separated from the structure, experiences, activities and outlook of the groups as social formations. Sub-cultural style is based on the infra-structure of group relations, activities and contexts.

This registering of group identity, situation and trajectory in a visible style both consolidates the group from a loosely-focussed to a tightly-bounded entity: and sets the group off, distinctively, from other similar and dissimilar groups. Indeed, like all other kinds of cultural construction, the symbolic use of things to consolidate and express an internal coherence was, in the same moment, a kind of implied opposition to (where it was

not an active and conscious contradiction of) other groups against which its identity was defined. This process led, in our period, to the distinctive visibility of those groups which pressed the 'sub-cultural solution' to its limits along this stylistic path. It also had profound negative consequences for the labelling, stereotyping and stigmatisation, in turn, of those groups by society's guardians, moral entrepreneurs, public definers and the social control culture in general.

It is important to stress again that sub-cultures are only *one* of the many different responses which the young can make to the situations in which they find themselves. In addition to indicating the range and variation in the options open to youth, we might add a tentative scheme which helps to make clear the distinction we are drawing between youth's *position* and the cultural options through which particular responses are organised.

We can distinguish, broadly, between three aspects: *structures*, *cultures* and *biographies*. (For a development of this scheme and its application to the situation of black youth, see the extract from *20 Years*, below.) By *structures* we mean the set of socially-organised positions and experiences of the class in relation to the major institutions and structures. These positions generate a set of common relations and experiences from which meaningful actions - individual and collective - are constructed. *Cultures* are the range of socially-organised and patterned responses to these basic material and social conditions. Though cultures form, for each group, a set of traditions - lines of action inherited from the past - they must always be collectively constructed anew in each generation. Finally, *biographies* are the 'careers' of particular individuals through these structures and cultures - the means by which individual identities and life-histories are constructed out of collective experiences. Biographies recognise the element of individuation in the paths which individual lives take through collective structures and cultures, but they must not be conceived as either wholly individual or free-floating. Biographies cut paths in and through the determined spaces of the structures and cultures in which individuals are located. Though we have not been able, here, to deal at all adequately with the level of biography, we insist that biographies only make sense in terms of the structures and cultures through which the individual constructs himself or herself.

## H. Rise of the counter-cultures

Up to this point, we have dealt exclusively with working-class youth sub-cultures. And there are some problems in deciding whether we can speak of *middle-class* sub-cultures in the same

COUNTER-CULTURE:

U.K.	
political	cultural
1965 CND anti-Vietnam march	Bob Dylan Tour
1966 Vietnam Solidarity Campaign Radical Student Alliance	I.T./OZ/B.I.T./Release
1967 Grosvenor Sq. I L.S.E. Sit-in. Dialectics of	Pirate Radio closed. IT raided Liberation conf. Stones drug arrests. Anti-University of London. Arts Lab.
1968 Grosvenor Sq. II & III. London squatting campaign R.S.S.F. founded Essex/Hornsey/Hull/Birmingham	Legalise Pot Rally. Black Dwarf. Hyde Park Free concerts. Time Out. Apple. Gandalf's Garden. Hair.
1969 Refusal of visas to N.Vietnam delegation - March. Peter Hain/S.T.S.T. 144 Piccadilly squat	Stones in Hyde Park 1st I. of Wight Festival Wootton Report rejected
1970 Garden House, Cambridge Fair Cricket Campaign W.L. Conf. Oxford/W.L. disrupt Miss World.	I. of Wight II. Godspell Yippies on Frost. IT Trial White Panthers. 'Female Eunuch'. 'Play Power'.
1971 Bombs: Carr; Biba; GPO. Angry Brigade arrests. Prescott Purdie Trials. OZ Trial. Mangrove case.	Ink/7 days begin. Nasty Tales seized. Glastonbury Fest. Rainbow opens. Socialist Woman. Festival of Light.
1972 Angry Brigade Trial Finance of Student Unions Issue. Hair privately prosecuted. Hull/LSE sit-ins Stirling.	Blueprint for Survival publ. Spare Rib. Undercurrents. Night Assemblies Bill. Bickershaw/Lincoln Fests.
1973 Grants Demos. Thames Poly. sit-in.	Save Piccadilly/London belongs to the People Campaigns. Last OZ. Alt. Soc. ideas pool
1974 Red Lion Square Demo. Troops Out Movement Chile. Essex.	Windsor Free Fest. CLAP Index of Possibilities F.O.E. paper at Whitehall

A CHRONOLOGY

U.S.		
political	cultural	
1st Nat. Anti-War March. SDS. Watts. Malcolm X assass.	Free University of N.Y.	1965
SNCC - Stokeley Carmichael. SDS anti-war sit ins	Diggers at Haight-Ashbury Kesey Trips Festival	1966
Black Panthers. Riots in Newark/Detroit. Newton jailed. Pentagon March.	First Be-in - San Francisco Monterey Pop Festival.	1967
Democratic Conv. - Chicago Luther King assass. 'Pig for President'. Black students struggle.	Yippies-Festival of Life Warhol/Valerie Solanas (SCUM) 'Revolution for the Hell of it' - Hoffman	1968
Anti-War Moratorium. SDS split - Weathermen bombings. Conspiracy trial. Fred Hampton shot. W.L. People's Park Berkeley Indians occupy Alcatraz	Woodstock Charlie Manson Sinclair of White Panthers in Easy Rider	1969
Panther shoot-outs. Kent State Angela Davis. Support for Panthers at Yale. Nixon/Agnew: War on bums.	Leary in and out of jail - sprung by Weathermen. Manson trial. 'Greening of America'	1970
Last Nat. anti-war March. Attica. Panthers split. George Jackson shot. Seale/ Huggins freed.	Sinclair 'out' aided by Lennon and Ono. Jim Morrison dies. 'We are everywhere' Rubin	1971
Angela Davis acquitted. Nixon back. Panthers 'survival conf' Indians occupy Bureau of Indian Affairs.	Bangla Desh Concert 'Fritz the Cat'	1972
Seale stands for Mayor of Oakland. Soglin-Radical Mayor Wisconsin. Symbionese Libera- tion Army. Marcus Foster.	Guru J. Leary recaptured - Kabul.	1973
S.L.A. shoot out & Patty Hearst. Watergate - Nixon's free pardon.	Leary recants Prisig - 'Zen and the art of motorcycle maintenance.	1974

way and within the same sort of theoretical framework. Yet, not only has the period since the war witnessed the rise of quite distinctive kinds of 'expressive movements' among middle-class youth, different from the school or 'student' cultures of the pre-war period, but, as we get closer to the 1970's, these have attracted, if anything, more public attention - and reaction - than their working-class counterparts. We point, of course, not simply to the growing involvement of middle-class youth with the commercialised popular culture and leisure associated with 'Youth Culture', but the appearance of quite distinct 'sub-cultural' currents: the Hippie movement; the various 'deviant' drug, drop-out and gay sub-cultures; the elements of cultural revolt in the student protest movements, etc. Most significant is the widespread cultural disaffiliation of broad sectors of middle-class youth - the phenomenon of the Counter-Culture. This has, in turn, been linked with the general radicalisation and politicisation (and de-politicisation) of some middle-class youth strata.

We must note some clear structural differences in the response of the youth of the different classes. Working-class sub-cultures are clearly articulated, collective structures - often, 'near-' or 'quasi'-gangs. Middle-class counter-cultures are diffuse, less group-centred, more individualised. The latter precipitate, typically, not tight sub-cultures but a diffuse counter-culture milieu. Working-class sub-cultures reproduce a clear dichotomy between those aspects of group life still fully under the constraint of dominant or 'parent' institutions (family, home, school, work), and those focussed on non-work hours - leisure, peer-group association. Middle-class counter-culture milieux merge and blur the distinctions between 'necessary' and 'free' time and activities. Indeed, the latter are distinguished precisely by their attempt to explore 'alternative institutions' to the central institutions of the dominant culture: new patterns of living, of family-life, of work or even 'un-careers'. Middle class youth remains longer than their working-class peers 'in the transitional stage'. Typically, working-class youth appropriate the existing environment, they construct distinct leisure-time activities around the given working-class environment - street, neighbourhood, football ground, seaside town, dance-hall, cinema, bomb-site, pub, disco. Middle class youth tend to construct enclaves within the interstices of the dominant culture. Where the former represent an appropriation of the 'ghetto', the latter often make an exodus to the 'ghetto'. During the high point of the Counter-Culture, in the 1960's, the middle-class counter-cultures formed a whole embryo 'alternative society', providing the Counter-Culture with an underground, institutional base. Here, the youth of each class reproduces the position of the 'parent' classes to which they belong. Middle-class culture affords the space and

opportunity for sections of it to 'drop out' of circulation. Working-class youth is persistently and consistently structured by the dominating alternative rhythm of Saturday Night and Monday Morning.

The objective oppositional content of working-class sub-cultures expresses itself socially. It is therefore often assimilated by the control culture to traditional forms of working-class 'delinquency', defined as Hooliganism or Vandalism. The counter-cultures take a more overtly ideological or political form. They make articulate their opposition to dominant values and institutions - even when, as frequently occurred, this does not take the form of an overtly political response. Even when working-class sub-cultures are aggressively class-conscious, this dimension tends to be repressed by the control culture, which treats them as 'typical delinquents'. Even when the middle-class counter-cultures are explicitly anti-political, their objective tendency is treated as, potentially, political.

Middle-class counter-cultures are a feature of the mid-1960's and after, rather than of the 1950's. Only a handful of the more intellectual youth was involved in the English counter-part to the 'Beat Movement'. The post-Beat, 'on-the-road', style was prevalent in and around CND and the peace-movement in the late 1950's - the beatnik/peacenik period, associated with the folk revival and the music of Bob Dylan. The Hippies of the later 1960's were the most distinctive of the middle-class sub-cultures. Their cultural influence on this sector of youth was immense, and many counter-culture values must still be traced back to their Hippie roots. Hippies helped a whole quasi-bohemian sub-cultural milieu to come into existence, shaped styles, dress, attitudes, music and so on. The alternative institutions of the Underground emerged, basically, from this matrix. But Hippie culture quickly fragmented into different strands - heads, freaks, street people, etc. It fed both the 'drop-out' and the drug sub-cultures of the period. It permeated student and ex-student culture. It was then crossed by influences stemming from the more political elements among middle-class youth - the student protest movement, radical social work, community action groups, the growth of the left sects and so on. All these tendencies came to a partial fusion in the period between 1967 and 1970 - the high point of the Counter-Culture. This formation, too, has fragmented in several directions. The two most distinctive strands flow, in a way, via drugs, mysticism, the 'revolution in life-style' into a Utopian alternative culture; or, the other way, via community action, protest action and libertarian goals, into a more activist politics. What we have here, in short, is a host of variant strands, connections and divergencies within a broadly defined counter-culture milieu, rather than (with the exception

of the drug and sexual sub-cultures) a sequence of tightly-defined, middle-class sub-cultures.

Both working-class sub-cultures and middle-class counter-cultures are seen, by moral guardians and the control culture, as marking a 'crisis in authority'. The 'delinquency' of the one and the 'disaffiliation' of the other index a weakening of the bonds of social attachment and of the formative institutions which manage how the former 'mature' into hard-working, law-abiding, respectable working-class citizens, or the latter into sober, career-minded, 'possessively-individual' bourgeois citizens. This is a break in, if not a break-down of, the reproduction of cultural-class relations and identities, as well as a loss of deference to 'betters and elders'. The difference is that where the first was a weakening of control over the youth of a subordinate class, the second was a crisis among the youth of the dominant class. As Gramsci remarked, when a 'crisis of authority' is spoken of, "this is precisely the crisis of hegemony or general crisis of the state".

Juliet Mitchell has argued:

Each class has aspects of its own culture, which are relatively autonomous. This fact is illustrated by such phrases as 'working class culture', 'ghetto culture', 'immigrant culture', etc., and by the absent phrase - 'middle class culture'. We talk of middle class mores: manners and habits ... but not of a whole 'culture'. We don't think of 'middle class culture' as something separate - it simply is the overall culture, within which are inserted these isolable other cultures. However, this cultural hegemony by bourgeois thought is not on an absolute par with the domination within the economy by the capitalist class. (Mitchell, 1971: 33)

Middle-class counter-culture spearheaded a dissent from their own, dominant, 'parent' culture. Their disaffiliation was principally ideological and cultural. They directed their attack mainly against those institutions which reproduce the dominant cultural-ideological relations - the family, education, the media, marriage, the sexual division of labour. These are the very apparatuses which manufacture 'attachment' and internalise consent. "Women, hippies, youth groups, students and school children all question the institutions which have formed them and try to erect their obverse ..." (Mitchell, 1971: 32). Certainly, some of these groups aimed for a systematic inversion, a symbolic upturning, of the whole bourgeois ethic. By pushing contradictory tendencies in the culture to extremes, they sought to subvert them, but from the inside, and by a negation. "Its libertarian aspirations appear as a negation of traditional culture: a methodological desublimation" (Marcuse: 1969). This 'negating' of a dominant culture, but from within that culture, may account for the continual oscillation between two extremes: total critique and - its reverse - substantial incorporation.

It initiated a profoundly ambiguous 'negative dialectic'.

Once again, this emergent movement among middle-class youth must be located, first, in the dynamic and contradictions peculiar, in this period, to its 'parent' middle-class culture. The middle classes have also been effected by the advancing division of labour under modern capitalist production. We have seen the growth of the intermediate white-collar and lower managerial strata, the rise of new professions alongside the old, a growth in the administrative and 'welfare-state' non-commercial middle classes, and new strata connected with the revolutions in communications, management and marketing. These are what Gramsci called "the organic intelligentsia" of modern capitalism - groups marked out by their "directive and technical capacity", their role as organisers, in the whole expanded sphere of production, of "masses of men ... of the 'confidence' of investors ... and of the customers for his product, etc." (Gramsci, 1971: 5). Schools and universities are the instruments "through which intellectuals of various levels are elaborated ... the more extensive the 'area' covered by education and the more numerous the 'vertical' levels of schooling, the more complex is the cultural world ..." (ibid). The expansion in education was, thus, central to changes in the composition, character and problematic of this class. Hence, a crisis in the youth of this class expressed itself, specifically, as a crisis in the educational and ideological apparatuses.

The relation between intellectual strata and the world of production is "'mediated' by the whole fabric of society and by the complex of super-structures" (ibid.). The culture of 'bourgeois' man, with its intricate emotional restraints and repressions, its regulated tempo of restraint and release, its commitment to the protestant 'ethic' of work, career, competitive achievement and possessive individualism, to the ideology of family privacy and the ideal of domesticity, forms a rich and complex integument around the developing mode of production. But, as capitalism moved, after the war, into its more technically advanced, corporate, consumer stage, this cultural integument was eroded. Critical rifts began to appear in this superstructural complex. The post-war reorganisation of the technical and productive life of the society, and the unsuccessful attempt to stabilise the mode of production at this more 'advanced' level, had an equally unsettling and 'uneven' impact on middle-class culture.

Many habits of thought and feeling, many settled patterns of relationship in middle-class culture, were disturbed by the cultural upheaval which accompanied this 'unfinished revolution'. This was not simply because the middle-classes - 'backbone of the nation' - were suddenly exposed to the controlled hedonism of

the 'ideology of affluence'. It was, more fundamentally, because the shift in the way the mode of production was organised required and provoked a qualitative expansion in the forces of 'mental production', a revolution in the spheres of modern consciousness. The harnessing of Capital's productive power needed, not only new social and technical skills, new political structures, but a more repetitive cycle of consumption, and forms of consciousness more attuned to the rhythms of consumption, and to the new productive and distributive capacities of the system. "Advanced capitalism ... is impossible without ... a parallel expansion of the social 'brain' and nerves of communication ..." (Nairn, 1968: 159). A greater share of productive wealth thus went to the formation of consciousness itself: to the production of that type of social intelligence which Marx once predicted would "regulate the reproduction and growth of wealth", as well as that type of false consciousness which found its apogee in the spectacular "fetishism of commodities".

This was an altogether different - puzzling, contradictory - world for the traditional middle classes, formed in and by an older, more 'protestant' ethic. Advanced capitalism now required, not thrift but consumption; not sobriety but style; not postponed gratifications but immediate satisfaction of needs; not goods that last but things that are expendable: the 'swinging' rather than the sober life-style. The gospel of work was hardly apposite to a life increasingly focussed on consumption, pleasure and play. The sexual repressiveness and ideals of domesticity enshrined in the middle-class family could not easily survive the growth of 'permissiveness'. Naturally, the middle-classes took fright at this erosion of their whole way of life: and when the middle-classes take fright, they conjure demons from the air. Traditional middle-class life, they imagined, was being undermined by a conspiracy between progressive intellectuals, soft liberals, the pornographers and the counter-culture. The fact is that this traditional culture was first, and most profoundly, unhinged, not by enemies of the class outside, but by changes within and stemming directly from the needs of the productive system itself. Long before OZ began its campaign against a repressive sexual morality, that morality had been eroded and undermined by, for example, the language of mass advertising with its aggressively exploitative pseudo-sexuality. As 'modern woman' undertook her 'long march' from *Woman's Own* to *Nova* and *Cosmopolitan* she passed from respectable homebody to jewelled good-time-girl, swinger of the ad-trade, without pausing for so much as a nod at Mrs. Whitehouse on the way. Naturally, the older ethic was challenged, not in the name of a fuller liberation, but only in the name of those needs which could be satisfied by commodities. Marcuse, profoundly and accurately located this controlled drift from the traditional class ethic into a consumer-based permissiveness, as a repressive

desublimation (Marcuse, 1964). Since traditional middle-class morality was hinged around repressive sublimation, this controlled desublimation was profoundly disturbing.

Gradually, a struggle has emerged between the traditional bourgeois - more accurately, 'petit-bourgeois' - strata and the more 'progressive' modern middle classes. But, in the first flush of affluence, the guardians of the middle-class ideal first encountered the break in the shape of 'youth': first, working-class, then its own. In the name of society, they resisted its hedonism, its narcissism, its permissiveness, its search for immediate gratifications, its anti-authoritarianism, its moral pluralism, its materialism: all defined as 'threats' to societal values springing from both aspirant working-class youth and mal-formed, badly-socialised middle-class youth. They mis-recognised the crisis within the dominant culture as a conspiracy against the dominant culture. They failed (as many members of the counter-cultures also failed) to see the cultural 'break' as, in its own traumatic and disturbing way, profoundly adaptive to the system's productive base.

"It may be true that the more advanced social systems of our own era may well be caught up in unprecedented dialectical conflicts of their own that threaten their internal stability" (H. Aitken, quoted in Nairn, 1968: 158). The counter-cultures were born within this qualitative break inside the dominant culture: in the caesura between the old and the new variants of the dominant ethic. But for some time, youth appeared, phenomenally, as both its most aggressive and its most visible bearers. The response was, characteristically, two sided. Traditionalists bewailed the 'crisis in authority', the loss in the stable reference points of older class cultures. The progressive strata, however, boosted, incorporated and mercilessly exploited it, commercially. Youth Culture was thus the first 'phenomenal form' of the cultural crisis. Though the revolt of middle-class youth was not contained by this adaptive framework, its subsequent trajectory owes much to its ambivalent starting-position between the two 'moral worlds' of the system: that is, to its paradoxical position within capitalism's uneven and incomplete transition.

If we think of the 'middle class revolt' in its purest, counter-cultural phase, though much of what it embodied was overtly antagonistic to sacred, traditional middle-class values, some of its goals were, objectively, profoundly adaptive for the system in a transitional moment. "One of the main functions of radical upheavals ... is to engender the new ideas, techniques, attitudes and values which a developing society requires but which the proprietors of its superstructure are unable to bring into being themselves because their social position is inevitably tied to the *status quo*" (Silber, 1970: 11). Alternative values, dysfunctional for the 'protestant ethic', may form the necessary, contested, contradictory bridge between older structures and the

controlled de-sublimation of a post-protestant capitalism.

Hegemonic cultures, however, are never free to reproduce and amend themselves without contradiction and resistance. Modern capitalism may have 'required' a new cultural-ideological ethos for its survival: but the passage from old to new was traumatic - and incomplete. A crisis in the dominant culture is a crisis for the social formation as a whole. Of course, opposition and resistance will assume different forms (See Raymond Williams, 1973). Movements which seem 'oppositional' may be merely survivals, traces from the past. (Cf: some aspects of counter-cultural 'pastoralism'.) Some may be merely 'alternative' - the new lying alongside the old. Marcuse has observed that "the simple, elementary negation, the antithesis ... the immediate denial" often leaves "the traditional culture, the illusionist art, unmastered" (Marcuse, 1969: 47). Others are truly 'emergent'; though they, too, must struggle, against redefinition by the dominant culture, and incorporation. Movements which are simply 'alternative' can provoke a backlash response which develops them internally, and forces them to become more truly oppositional. They can *become* 'emergent'; or be *redefined* and absorbed, depending on the historical conjuncture in which they arise. The post-war middle-class counter-cultures present us with just such a confused and uneven picture.

Some aspects of this cultural upheaval were, clearly, adaptive and incorporable. The counter-cultures performed an important task on behalf of the system by pioneering and experimenting with new social forms which ultimately gave it greater flexibility. In many aspects, the revolutions in 'life-style' were a pure, simple, raging, commercial success. In clothes, and styles, the counter-culture explored, in its small scale 'artisan' and vanguard capitalist forms of production and distribution, shifts in taste which the mass consumption chain-stores were too cumbersome, inflexible and over-capitalised to exploit. When the trends settled down, the big commercial battalions moved in and mopped up. Much the same could be said of the music and leisure business, despite the efforts here to create real, alternative, networks of distribution. 'Planned permissiveness', and organised outrage, on which sections of the alternative press survived for years, though outrageous to the moral guardians, did not bring the system to its knees. Instead, over-ground publications and movies became more permissive - *Playgirl* moved in where *OZ* had feared to tread. The mystical-Utopian and quasi-religious revivals were more double edged: but the former tended to make the counter-culture anti-scientific in a mindless way, and over-ideological - the idea that 'revolution is in the mind', for example; or that 'youth is a class'; or that Woodstock is 'a nation': or, in Jerry Rubin's immortal words, that "people should do whatever the fuck they want" (Silber, 1970: 58) - and the quasi-religious revivals gave to religion a

lease of life which nothing else seemed capable of doing. The new individualism of 'Do your Own thing', when taken to its logical extremes, seemed like nothing so much as a looney caricature of petit-bourgeois individualism of the most residual and traditional kind.

This does not, however, exhaust their oppositional content. At the simplest level their emergence marked the failure of the dominant culture to win over the attachment of a sector of its 'brightest and best'. The disaffiliation from the goals, structures and institutions of 'straight society' was far-reaching. Here, the counter-cultures provided, at the very least, that social and cultural breathing-space - a hiatus in the reproduction of cultural relations - in which a deeper disaffiliation was hatched. It cracked the mould of the dominant culture. 'Repressive desublimation' is a dangerous, two-sided phenomenon. When the codes of traditional culture are broken, and new social impulses are set free, they are impossible fully to contain. Open the door to 'permissiveness' and a more profound sexual liberation may follow. Raise the slogan of 'freedom', and some people will give it an unexpectedly revolutionary accent and content. Invest in the technical means for expanding consciousness, and consciousness may expand beyond predictable limits. Develop the means of communication, and people will gain access to print and audiences for which the web-offset litho press were never intended. "The ideologies cultivated in order to achieve ultimate control of the market ... are ones which can rebel *in their own terms* ... the cult of 'being true to your own feelings' becomes dangerous when those feelings are no longer ones that the society would like you to feel. Testing the quality of your world on your own pulse can bring about some pretty strange heart-beats" (Mitchell, 1971: 31). In fact, as soon as the counter-cultures began to take the new slogans at face value, the slogans were transformed into their opposite. Though the nature of this inversion remained, centrally, ideological and cultural - 'superstructural' in character - the systematic up-turning of the traditional ethic gave the counter-cultures an objective oppositional thrust which was not wholly absorbable - and was not wholly absorbed. A sustained assault on the ideological structure of a society is a moment of high contradiction; especially if it occurs in societies which increasingly depend precisely on the institutions of consciousness-formation both for the engineering of consent and the social control of the productive process. This represents a *break in society's "higher nervous system"* (Nairn, 1968: 156). This break not only "brings the contradictions out into the open", converting private alienation into 'trouble in the streets'. It tends to - and did - unleash the "powers of the coercive state violence that are always there as a background



support" (Mitchell, 1971: 32). And repression - or rather, "this relationship between the quietude of consensus and the brutality of coercion" hardens the line between the 'permissive' and the impermissible, creates solidarities, installs the counter-cultures as a semi-permanent free-zone, and pushes forwards the incipient tendency towards politicisation. In the period between 1968 and 1972, many sectors of the counter-culture fell into 'alternative' paths and Utopian solutions. But others went forwards into a harder, sharper, more intense and prolonged politics of protest, activism, community action, libertarian struggle and, finally, the search for a kind of convergence with working-class politics.

The subsequent evolution of middle class counter-cultures is too complex a story to unravel here. The Counter-culture, with its flourishing alternative press and institutions has fragmented, diffused, though it has not disappeared. The interpenetration of alternative life-styles and values with radical politics is a continuing feature. Certain counter-culture themes stimulated an organised political 'backlash' (on drugs and pornography, for example). Other themes have led on to new kinds of politics: women's liberation and gay liberation, for example. The 'Utopian' experimentation with alternative ways of living - the commune and the collective - continues among sectors of both the political and 'post-political' segments. Many individuals have more or less permanently 'dropped out', or gone into 'uncareers' around the fringes of the counter-culture milieu. Many have been recruited into the left groups and sects. Others have turned to community activism or to radical social work. Some have preserved the essence of the libertarian ideal, but redefined it in more political terms - there is a 'libertarian', an anarcho-syndicalist, as well as a 'marxist' oriented counter-politics. In general, this partial convergence between middle-class counter-cultures and radical politics has been over-determined by the general turn into a more authoritarian, 'law-and-order' mood in the control culture, by the gathering political and economic crisis, and above all by the resumption, especially after 1972, of a more open and vigorous industrial and non-industrial working class politics (See Diagram).

The overall trajectory of middle-class youth is thus difficult to estimate. Irwin Silber has argued that, "the working class understands on some gut level that the 'cultural revolution' is no revolution at all. Far from freeing the worker from the reality of capitalist exploitation, it will only leave him defenceless against the class enemy. The worker recognises ... that this 'cultural revolution' is only a thinly-disguised middle class elitism, a philosophy engendered by those elements in society who can still find partial individual solutions to the realities

of class oppression. The worker's tenuous hold on economic security does not permit those individual acts of self-liberation which reflect themselves in 'groovy' life styles ..." (Silber, 1970: 26). But this account underestimates both the depth of the 'break' effected by the 'cultural revolution' and the economism of working class resistance. Marcuse has argued that "in the domain of corporate capitalism, the two historical factors of transformation, the subjective and the objective, do not coincide: they are prevalent in different and even antagonistic groups". (Marcuse, 1969: 56) But this both underestimates the depth of the economic crisis in capitalism, and posits a simple split between "the human base of the process of production" (workers) and "the political consciousness among the non-conformist young intelligentsia", which is untenable and undialectical (Marcuse, 1969: *ibid*). Nevertheless, it remains true that nowhere has this convergence been completed. Where authentic counter-cultural values and 'focal concerns' survive, they appear *divergent* with respect to both traditional middle-class and working-class values and strategies. In this discrepancy, middle-class sub-cultures continue to reveal their transitional class character and displaced position, and articulate the extremely uneven tempo of the post-1968 break in the traditional structures. (We have tried, below, to express this *double divergence* diagrammatically.)

At one level, middle class counter-cultures - like working-class sub-cultures - also attempted to work out or work through, but at an 'imaginary' level, a contradiction or problematic in their class situation. But, because they inhabit a dominant culture (albeit in a negative way) they are strategically placed (in ways which working-class sub-cultures are *not*) to generalise an internal contradiction for the society as a whole. The counter-cultures stemmed from changes in the 'real relations' of their class: they represented a rupture inside the dominant culture which then became linked with the crisis of hegemony, of civil society and ultimately of the state itself. It is in *this* sense that middle-class counter-cultures, beginning from a point *within* the dominant class culture, have become an emergent ruptural force for the whole society. Their thrust is no longer contained by their point of inception. Rather, by extending and developing their 'practical critique' of the dominant culture from a privileged position inside it, they have come to inhabit, embody and express many of the contradictions of the system itself. Naturally, society cannot be 'imaginarily' reconstructed from that point. But that does not exhaust their emergent potential. For they also prefigure, anticipate, foreshadow - though in truncated, diagrammatic and 'Utopian' forms - emergent social forms. These new forms are rooted in the productive base of the system itself, though when



<u>Traditional Middle Class</u>	<u>Counter-Culture</u>	<u>Working Class</u>
status nuclear family career	style commune 'uncareer'/right not-to-work	class extended family job
pro-business	anti-business & union	pro-union
home	'pad'	home
residential area work/leisure formal repres- entation	'enclave' work-is-play 'participation'	neighbourhood work/leisure formal democracy
elitism civic/private	'leaderlessness' personal-is-the -public	democracy public/private
graded public education/ private school	'free school'/ de-schooling	mass public education
club	'scene'	pub
high culture high fashion high consumption	life-is-art 'boutique' anti-consump- tion	mass culture chain store mass consumption
materialist	anti-material- ist	materialist
restraint sober	'freedom' libertarian	constraint respectable
adapt to roles masculine/ (feminine)	transcend roles break gender roles	negotiate roles masculine/(feminine)
possessive individualism	'fraternal' individualism	collective

they arise at the level of the 'counter-culture' *only*, we are correct to estimate that their maturing within the womb of society is, as yet, incomplete. They prefigure, among other things, the increasingly social nature of modern production, and the outdated social, cultural, political and ideological forms in which this is confined. The counter-cultures come, at best, half-way on the road to making manifest this base contradiction. Some analysts suggest that this comes through clearest in what Marcuse has called 'the new sensibility'. Nairn points, in the same direction, to the prefiguring of a new kind of 'social individual'. He speaks of the promise that "'youth' can for the first time assume an other than biological meaning, a positive social meaning, as the bearer of those pressures in the social body which prefigure a new society instead of the reproduction of the old one" (Nairn: 1968: 172-3). These larger meanings of the rise of the counter-cultures cannot be settled here - if only because, historically, their trajectory is unfinished. What they did was to put these questions on the political agenda. Answers lie elsewhere.

### I. The social reaction to youth

As we have already hinted, the dominant society did not calmly sit on the sidelines throughout the period and watch the sub-cultures at play. What began as a response of confused perplexity - caught in the pat phrase, 'the generation gap' - became, over the years, an intense, and intensified struggle. In the 1950's, 'youth' came to symbolise the most advanced point of social change: youth was employed as a *metaphor* for social change. The most extreme trends in a changing society were identified by the society's taking its bearings from what youth was 'up to': youth was the *vanguard party* - of the classless, post-protestant, consumer society to come. This displacement of the tensions provoked by social change on to 'youth' was an ambiguous manoeuvre. Social change was seen as generally beneficial ('you've never had it so good'); but also as eroding the traditional landmarks and undermining the sacred order and institutions of traditional society. It was therefore, from the first, accompanied by feelings of diffused and dispersed social anxiety. The boundaries of society were being redefined, its moral contours redrawn, its fundamental relations (above all, those class relations which for so long gave a hierarchical stability to English life) transformed. As has been often remarked (Cf: Erikson, 1966; Cohen, 1973, etc.), movements which disturb a society's normative contours mark the inception of troubling times - especially for those sections of the population who have made an overwhelming commitment to the continuation of the *status quo*. 'Troubling times', when social anxiety is widespread but fails to find an organised public or political expression, give rise to the displacement of social anxiety

on to convenient scapegoat groups. This is the origin of the 'moral panic' - a spiral in which the social groups who perceive their world and position as threatened, identify a 'responsible enemy', and emerge as the vociferous guardians of traditional values: moral entrepreneurs. It is not surprising, then, that youth became the focus of this social anxiety - its displaced object. In the 1950's, and again in the early 1960's, the most visible and identifiable youth groups were involved in dramatic events which triggered off 'moral panics', focussing, in displaced form, society's 'quarrel with itself'. Events connected with the rise of the Teds, and later, the motor-bike boys and the Mods, precipitated classic moral panics. Each event was seen as signifying, in microcosm, a wider or deeper social problem - the problem of youth as a whole. In this crisis of authority, youth now played the role of *symptom* and *scapegoat*.

'Moral panics' of this order were principally focussed to begin with, around 'Working-class youth'. The tightly organised sub-cultures - Teds, Mods, etc. - represented only the most visible targets of this reaction. Alongside these, we must recall the way youth became connected, in the 1958 Notting Hill riots, with that other submerged and displaced theme of social anxiety - race; and the general anxiety about rising delinquency, the rising rate of juvenile involvement in crime, the panics about violence in the schools, vandalism, gang fights, and football hooliganism. Reaction to these and other manifestations of 'youth' took a variety of forms: from modifications to the Youth Service and the extension of the social work agencies, through the prolonged debate about the decline in the influence of the family, the clampdowns on truancy and indiscipline in the schools, to the Judge's remarks, in the Mods vs. Rockers trial, that they were nothing better than "Sawdust Caesars". The waves of moral panic reached new heights with the appearance of the territorial-based Skinheads, the football riots and destruction of railway property.

To this was added, in the mid-1960's, a set of 'moral panics' of a new kind, this time focussing around middle-class youth and 'permissiveness'. Working-class youth groups were seen as symptomatic of deeper civil unrest. But middle-class groups, with their public disaffiliation, their ideological attack on 'straight society', their relentless search for pleasure and gratification, etc., were interpreted as action, more consciously and deliberately, to undermine social and moral stability: youth, now, as the active *agents* of social breakdown. The first wave of social reaction in this area crystallised around social, moral and cultural issues: drugs, sexuality, libertinism, pornography, the corruption of the young - the key themes of the 'permissive revolution'. (This produced, in response, the first organised anti-permissive 'backlash' amongst the moral guardians -Mrs.

Whitehouse, the Longford Report, the Festival of Light, SPUC., etc.) The second wave crystallised around the 'politicisation' of this counter-culture - student protest, the new street politics demonstrations, etc. Here 'youth' was cast, not simply as the conscious agents of change, but as deliberately pushing society into anarchy: youth as the *subversive minority*. And now The Law, which had been mobilised from time to time, in its 'normal' routine way, to deal with hooliganism and vandalism, was brought more formally and actively into play. This shift inside the control culture, from informal outrage and moral crusading to formal constraint and legal control, had wider origins (which we cannot enter into here: see the Law and Order Sections of the forthcoming study of Mugging, CCCS.). But it came to bear heavily and directly on youth: the succession of trials and legal actions (the trials of OZ and IT, the arrests of prominent counter-culture figures for drug possession, the Little Red School Book affair, the drug and pornography 'clean-ups' instituted by the police, etc.) were matched by equally dramatic legal controls against youth's more political wing (the Garden House trial, the trials of Peter Hain and the Springbok Tour protesters, the Angry Brigade Trial and the widespread use of conspiracy charges). When these are taken together with the much-augmented activity of the police and Special Branch, the extension of the law to industrial relations, strikes and picketing, the affairs of the five dockers and the Shrewsbury pickets, it makes sense, from about 1970 onwards (not surprisingly, in step with the return of the Heath government to power), to speak of a qualitative shift in the nature and activities of the control culture, a sharp movement towards 'closure' - the birth of a 'Law 'N Order' society. Though youth was, in this polarising climate, by no means the only object of attack and control, it continued to provide one of the pivots of more organised and orchestrated public campaigns. In these campaigns, politicians, chief constables, judges, the press and media joined hands and voices with the moral guardians in a general 'crack-down' on 'youth' and 'the permissive society'. The sharpening of control was nowhere so evident as in the activities of police and courts, local councillors and residents, against black youth - a moral panic which yielded, in 1972-3, the near conspiracy of the 'Mugging' scare. (But in fact, from about 1969 onwards, the black community, and especially black youth, is being constantly 'policed' in the ghetto areas.)

The contradictoriness of this 'control' response to youth must not be neglected. In the 1950's, the press publicised and patronised the 'Teds' in the very same moment that the fire hoses were brought up to control the crowds queuing to see 'Rock Around The Clock'. 'Mods' appeared, simultaneously, in court and on the front pages of the colour supplements. The date of the Mods vs. Rockers show-down coincided with the 'Mod' fashion

explosion, with the 'takeover' by 'mod' styles of the Kings Road and the birth of 'Swinging London'. Hippies trailed their flowered gear all the way across the television screen to the addict centres. Mick Jagger was flown by helicopter, virtually straight from the Old Bailey to meet venerable figures of the Establishment to discuss the state of the world. There is a continuing, and characteristically twofaced musing in the high-brow press over the fate and fortunes of pop music throughout the period. We cannot examine either the detail or the roots of this ambivalence here, though we hope we have said enough to indicate that the two faces of the social reaction to youth - patronising publicity and imitation versus moral anxiety and outrage - both had their roots in a deeper social and cultural crisis in the society. However, as the disaffiliation of working-class youth became more pronounced, more traditionally 'delinquent' in form, as the counter-culture became organised and politicised, and as other sources of political dissent (especially from the organised working class movement) moved into greater visibility, above all, as the first flush of economic 'affluence' gave way to crisis and stagflation, the bloom faded. Whenever the 'Law and Order' society went campaigning - as it did with increasing frequency in the late 1960's and 70's - some section of youth was never very far from the centre of social concern, and of social control. Yet, looking across the whole span of the period, it is difficult to estimate firmly whether the more overt 'attack' on youth was of greater or lesser significance than the tendency, throughout the period as a whole, of the dominant culture to seek and find, in 'youth', the folk-devils to people its nightmare: the nightmare of a society which, in some fundamental way, had lost its sway and authority over its young, which had failed to win their hearts, minds and consent, a society teetering towards 'anarchy', secreting, at its heart, what Mr. Powell so eloquently described as an unseen and nameless "Enemy". The whole collapse of hegemonic domination to which this shift from the 1950's to the 1970's bears eloquent witness, was written - etched - in 'youthful' lines.

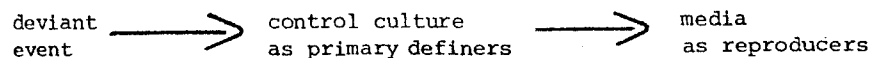
FOOTNOTE

1. But see also, for the original formulation of the important concept 'homology', Willis (1972). A shorter version of this study is shortly to be published in a revised form as 'Profane Culture', Routledge and Kegan Paul.

**Some notes on the relationship between the societal control culture and the news media, and the construction of a law and order campaign**

**| The Media and the Control Culture: a symbiotic relationship**

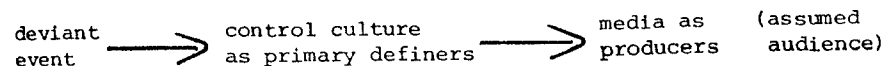
- (1) THE CONTROL CULTURE AS PRIMARY DEFINERS: MEDIA AS REPRODUCERS



(e.g. the press description of a killing on August 17th, 1972, as a "mugging gone wrong" was the direct reproduction of a police spokesman's statement.)

- Notes:
- a. The routine structures of news production - impartiality and objectivity - direct the media in the first instance to outside, accredited sources. In the case of 'deviant' events, this, in practice, means the representatives of the Control Culture (e.g. police, judiciary, Home Office). Thus, news items are based in the reproductions of primary definitions presented by the Control Culture.
  - b. The structure of 'balance' requires the admission of alternative definitions, but these almost always come later, and so are required to reply on terrain already marked out by the primary definitions; and they, too, must come from accredited alternative sources (organisations or 'experts'), and not from 'deviants' themselves.

- (2) THE MEDIA AS PRODUCERS: TRANSFORMATION, OBJECTIFICATION AND THE 'PUBLIC VOICE'



(e.g. Daily Mirror headline, 14th June, 1973, AGGRO BRITAIN was used to summarise the Chief Constables Report for 1972, where the words were not used.)

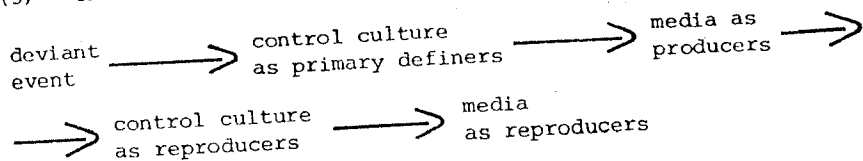
- Notes:
- a. Once primary definitions are 'in play', the media can transform these by translating them into their own public language. This language is based on the

particular paper's assumption about its audience and their language.

b. This process of transformation is, like all news items, a process of *objectification*, i.e. it makes an event a concrete, publicly knowable event. In addition, the 'public' language makes it appear that the media is operating independently of the primary definers.

c. Also, in a more active role still, the media can actually *campaign* on an issue, by claiming - through editorials - to speak with the 'voice of the public'.

### (3) THE CLOSURE OF THE CIRCLE



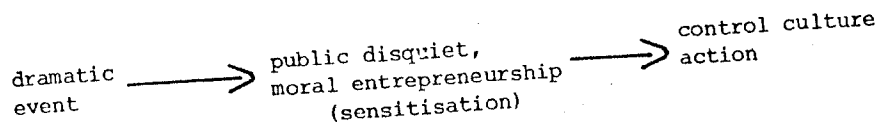
(e.g. "The newspapers have made it known that sentences for attacks on the open highway will no longer be light." Mr. Justice Caulfield, at Leicester Crown Court, quoted in the *Daily Express*, 21st March, 1973.)

Note: Once the media have spoken in their voice, on behalf of the inaudible public, the primary definers can then use the media's statements and claims as legitimations (magically, without any visible connection) for their actions and statements, by claiming press - and via the press, public - support. In turn, the ever attentive media reproduce the Control Culture statements, thus completing the magical circle, with such effect that it is no longer possible to tell who first began the process; each legitimates the other in turn.

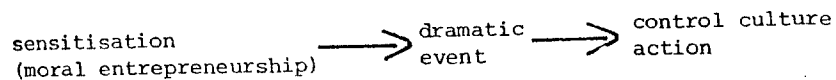
## 2 The mechanics of a Law and Order campaign

(1) MORAL PANICS: THREE HISTORICAL TYPES:

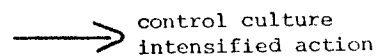
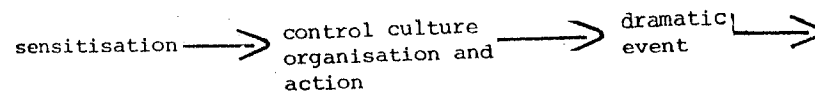
(i) Discrete Moral Panics (early 60's, e.g. Mods and Rockers)



(ii) 'Crusading' - mapping together discrete moral panics to produce a 'speeded-up' sequence (late 60's, e.g. pornography, drugs.)



(iii) Post-Law 'n' Order Campaign: an altered sequence (early 70's, e.g., mugging).



Note: In the final example, we must note the tendency of the Control Culture to act in *anticipation* of the public visibility of a particular 'scare'.

### (2) THE 'SIGNIFICATION SPIRAL'

A way of publicly signifying issues and problems which is intrinsically escalating, i.e. it increases the perceived potential threat of an issue through the way it becomes signified.

- Elements:
- The identification of a specific issue.
  - The identification of a "subversive minority".
  - 'Convergence' or the linking by labelling of the specific issue to other problems.
  - The notion of 'thresholds' which, once crossed, can lead to further escalation of the problem's "menace" to society.
  - The element of explaining and prophesying which often involves making analagous references to the Unites States - the paradigm example.
  - The call for firm steps.

Note: From 1968 onwards, this became the media paradigm for handling threatening issues across the whole national daily press (e.g., *Sunday Express* editorial, 27th October, 1968, and *Sunday Times* editorial, 27th April, 1969; both on students.)

(3) CONVERGENCE

The linking of the specific issue to others by labelling, either explicitly or implicitly.

three types:

	Real Movement	Example	Signification
i	Actual Convergence	Homosexuals— Gay Liberation Front (GLF)	Potentially accurate
ii	Some Convergence	GLF— Marxist Left— 'Red' conspiracy	increasingly contains a purely ideological dimension
iii	No Convergence	Students—hooligans	purely ideological

Note: As the period progresses there is a tendency to 'map' together increasing numbers of problems as constituting *one single threat*, and for this convergence to contain an increasing purely ideological construction (see, for example, the report of Powell's Northfield Speech, *Sunday Times*, 14th June, 1970).

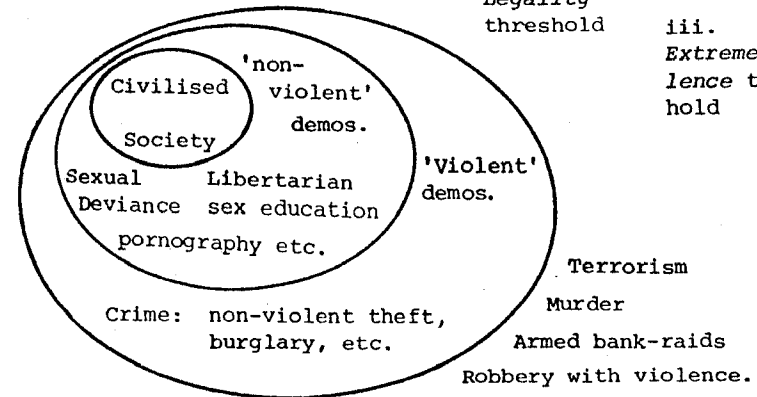
(4) THRESHOLDS

Boundaries staking out progressively societal tolerance limits

i. Permissiveness threshold

ii. Legality threshold

iii. Extreme Violence threshold



- i) Crossing of Permissiveness threshold threatens to undermine social AUTHORITY (moral standards)
- ii) Crossing of Legality threshold threatens to undermine social LEGITIMACY (parliamentary channels)
- iii) Crossing of Extreme Violence threshold threatens to undermine social CONTROL (the State itself)

- Notes:
- a. As period progresses there is an increasing tendency for events to be pushed beyond thresholds  
 e.g. 1966-70: threshold of Permissiveness dominant  
 1970-on: threshold of Legality dominant  
 1972-on: threshold of Extreme Violence dominant
  - b. Events are projected across thresholds by stressing the illegal or violent (or both) aspects of the permissive, or the violent aspects of the illegal. Thus, in our example (above) non-violent protest demonstrations, at most a 'permissive' flouting of social authority, can be projected across the thresholds of Legality and Extreme Violence by being signified as violent. In this way, by being signified as a threat to Social Control, firm control measures are legitimated.

These notes derive from the work of the CCCS Mugging Group.