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 oppostional 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

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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

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

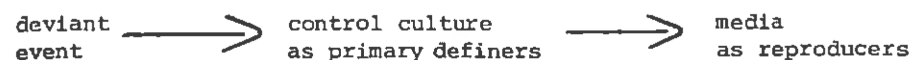
FOOTNOTE

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

I The Media and the Control Culture: a symbiotic relationship

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

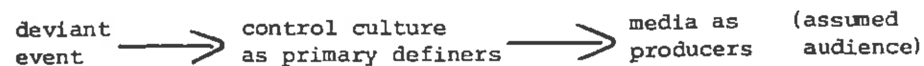


(e.g. the press description of a killing on August 17th, 1972, as a "mugging gone wrong" was the direct reproduction of a police spokesman's statement.)

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.)

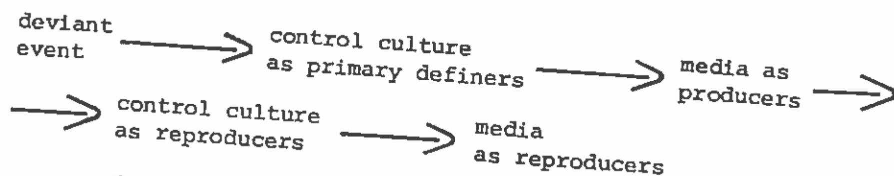
Notes: a. Once primary definitions are 'in play', the media can *transform* these by translating them into their own public language. This language is based on the

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



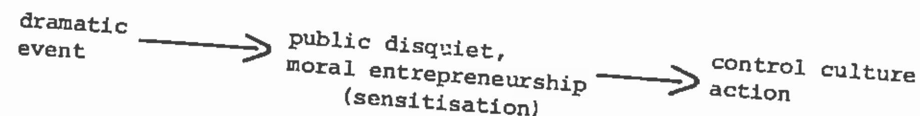
(e.g. "The newspapers have made it known that sentences for attacks on the open highway will no longer be light." Mr. Justice Caulfield, at Leicester Crown Court, quoted in the *Daily Express*, 21st March, 1973.)

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

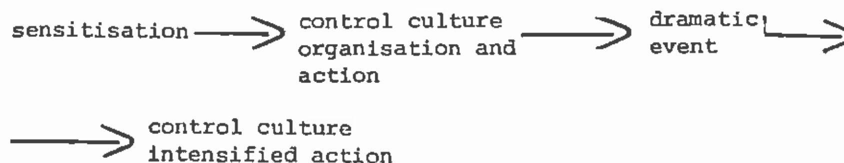
(1) MORAL PANICS: THREE HISTORICAL TYPES:

(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 instrinsically *escalating*, i.e. it increases the perceived potential *threat* of an issue through the way it becomes signified.

Elements:

(a) The identification of a specific issue.
(b) The identification of a "subversive minority".
(c) 'Convergence' or the linking by labelling of the specific issue to other problems.
(d) The notion of 'thresholds' which, once crossed, can lead to further escalation of the problem's "menace" to society.
(e) The element of explaining and prophesying which often involves making analagous references to the Unites States - *the* paradigm example.
(f) 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.

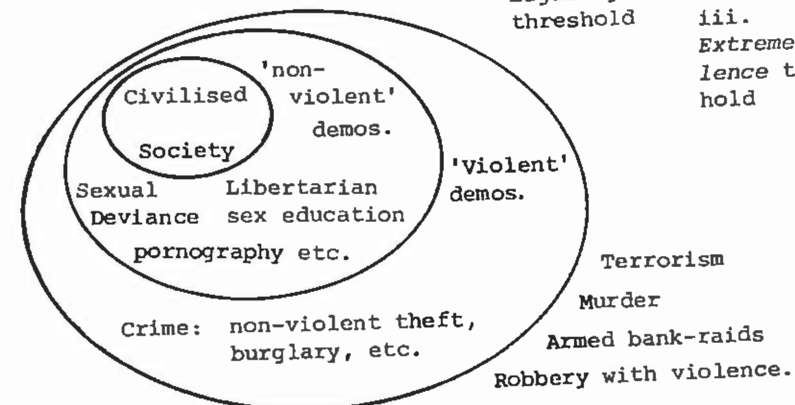
three types:

	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 ideo-logical dimension
iii	No Convergence	Students—hooligans	purely ideo - logical

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) 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 thrashold 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 thesholds 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.

ETHNOGRAPHY

CULTURAL RESPONSES OF THE TEDS

Tony Jefferson

Note: *In his review of Teddy Boy culture, Tony Jefferson deals with three related aspects: the way the "sense of group" of the Teds and their low or "near-lumpen" status made them extremely sensitive to insults, real or imagined; the way this over-sensitivity became attached, primarily to the distinctive dress and appearance of the group; and the elements which the Teds borrowed from the dominant culture and reworked into a distinctive style of their own. This "proletarianisation" of an upper-class style of dress was no mere stylistic flourish: it expressed, Jefferson argues, both the reality and the aspirations of the group. A longer version of this paper is available* (Stencilled Paper No.22, CCCS).

In the light of growing structural inequalities [argued earlier in the paper] how can we read the Teds' cultural responses as symbolic articulations of their social plight? If we look at the cultural responses adopted, in turn, what becomes apparent in decoding them is an attempt to defend, symbolically, a constantly threatened space and a declining status.

a) Group-Mindedness: The group-mindedness of the Teds can be read partly as a response to the post-war upheaval and destruction of the socially cohesive force of the extended kinship network. Thus the group life and intense loyalty of the Teds can be seen as a reaffirmation of traditional slum working-class values and the "strong sense of territory" (Downes, 1966: 119), as an attempt to retain, if only imaginatively, a hold on the territory which was being expropriated from them, by developers, on two levels:

(1) the actual expropriation of land;

(2) the less tangible expropriation of the culture attached to the land, i.e. the kinship networks and the "articulations of communal space" mentioned by Cohen (1972: 16).

b) Extreme Touchiness to Insults, Real or Imagined: If we look at their extreme touchiness to insults, real or imagined, we find that most of these incidents revolved around insults to themselves personally, to their appearance generally, and their dress in particular. To illustrate this point, using one of the more dramatic examples available; the first 'Teddy boy' killing, the Clapham Common murder of 1953, was a result of a fight between three youths and a group of Teds which had been started when one of the Teds had been called 'a flash cunt' by one of the youths. (For a full account of this incident, and the subsequent trial, see Parker, 1969.)

My contention is that to lads traditionally lacking in status, and *being further deprived of what little they possessed* [a reference to the declining social situation of the Teds, argued earlier in the fuller version of this paper] there remained only the self, the cultural extension of the self (dress, personal appearance) and the social extension of the self (the group). Once threats were perceived in these areas, the only 'reality' or 'space' on which they had any hold, then the fights, *in defence of this space* become explicable and *meaningful* phenomena.

If we look closely at the objects of Teddy boy fighting, this notion of defending their space is, I believe, further amplified. Group fights, i.e. fights with other groups of Teds, are explicable in terms of a defence of the social extension of the self– the group (hence, the importance of 'group-mindedness'). Fights which ensued when individuals insulted Teds are explicable in terms of *a defence of the self and the cultural extension of the self symbolised in their dress and general appearance*. Especially important in this area is the touchiness to insults about dress. This I shall enlarge upon in the next section on 'Dress'.

Whilst many of their fights resulted from extreme sensitivity to insults, even their attacks on the Cypriot proprietors of Cypriot cafes, and Blacks, can be read in terms of defence: a defence of status. Their position as 'lumpen' youths was worsening *independently* of the influx of Commonwealth immigrants in the early 1950's, but in the absence of a coherent and articulate grasp of their social reality, it was perhaps inevitable that they should perceive this influx as causal rather than coincidental. Thus, they rationalised their position as being, in part anyway, due to the immigrants and displaced their frustration onto them. An additional irritant was the perception many Teds had of immigrants as actually making it – the corollary of this, of course, was that they were making it 'at the Teds expense'. The cafe-owning Cypriots were one example of those who had 'made it'. Others were the coloured landlords and

racketeers. Living, as many Teds did, in dilapidated inner urban areas scheduled for re-development, they came into contact with the minority of coloureds, who, because of the hopelessness of *their* position, (being coloured and working class,) were forced into positions of very limited options (small-time racketeering and pimping were probably two of the more available and attractive). And so the myth of the coloured immigrants being either pimps, landlords or in on the rackets, very prevalent among Teds, (and many white working class adults) started and spread. The repercussions of all this, the 1958 'race-riots' in Nottingham and Notting Hill are known, sadly, only too well. That it should have been the Teds who started them lends weight to my thesis. That large numbers of working class adults responded in the way they did, by joining in, demonstrates that it was not only the young 'lumpen' who were experiencing a worsening of their socio-economic position. But, in an age of 'affluence' the *real structural causes* could not be admitted, and predictably, were not. Instead, the nine *unskilled working class adolescents* who started the Notting Hill riots, were savagely sentenced to four years' imprisonment apiece. The obvious scape-goating involved, as in all similar cases of scape-goat punishments, was, and still is, a sure sign of mystification at work – the protective cloak of the ruling classes being drawn closer to prevent its real interests becoming too visible.

The attacks on youth clubs are perhaps easiest to explain if one remembers that many youth clubs banned all Teddy boys purely on 'reputation'. Simple revenge must then have constituted the basis for some attacks. Additionally, though, there was the chronic lack of public provision of facilities to match the increase in adolescent leisure (see, for example, Fyvel, 1963: 120-3). Consequently, much was then expected of what was provided – far too much. When these failed to live up to the expectations, as they invariably did, the disappointment was invariably increased. Thus, ironically, the youth clubs that did exist, far from alleviating adolescent leisure problems actually exacerbated them. (For a fascinating account of the trials and tribulations experienced in this area and of a valiant but short-lived attempt to supply the kids with what they *wanted* see Gosling, 1962). Finally, the attacks on bus conductors. Since these attacks were usually on conductors on late-night bus routes, this suggests that the opportunity of anonymity, and possibly alcohol, combined to increase the already high level of sensitivity to imagined insults.

c) Dress and Appearance: Despite periodic unemployment, despite the unskilled jobs, Teds, in common with other teenagers at work during this period, were relatively affluent. Between 1945-1950, the average real wage of teenagers increased at twice the adult rate (see, for example, Abrams, 1959). Teds thus certainly had

money to spend and, because it was practically all they had, it assumed a *crucial* importance. Much of the money went on clothes: the Teddy boy 'uniform'. But before decoding this particular cultural articulation, a sketch of the 'style' and its history is necessary.

Originally, the Edwardian suit was introduced in 1950 by a group of Savile Row tailors who were attempting to initiate a new style. It was addressed, primarily, to the young aristocratic men about town. Essentially the dress consisted of a long, narrow - lapelled, waisted jacket, narrow trousers (but without being 'drainpipes'), ordinary toe-capped shoes, and a fancy waistcoat. Shirts were white with cutaway collars and ties were tied with a 'windsor' knot. Headwear, if worn, was a trilby. The essential changes from conventional dress were the cut of the jacket and the dandy waistcoat. Additionally, barbers began offering individual styling, and hair length was generally longer than the conventional short back and sides. (This description is culled from a picture of the 'authentic' Edwardian dress which was put out by the *Tailor and Cutter* and printed in the *Daily Sketch*, 14th November, 1953, in order to dissociate the 'authentic' from the working-class adoption of the style.)

This dress began to be taken up by working class youths sometime in 1953 and, in those early days, was often taken over wholesale (The *Daily Mirror* of 23rd October, 1953, shows a picture of Michael Davies, who was convicted of what later became known as the first 'teddy boy' killing, which would bear this out. In fact the picture shows him in a three piece matching suit, i.e. without the fancy waistcoat.)

The later modifications to this style by the Teds were the bootlace tie; the thick-creped suede shoes (Eton clubman chukka type); skin-tight, drainpipe trousers (without turn-ups); straighter, less waisted jackets; moleskin or satin collars to the jackets; and the addition of vivid colours. The earlier sombre suit colours occasionally gave way to suits of vivid green, red or pink and other 'primitive' colours (see Sandilands, 1963). Blue-suede shoes, post-Elvis, were also worn. The hair-style also underwent a transformation: it was usually long, combed into a 'D-A' with a boston neck-line (straight cut), greasy, with side whiskers and a quiff. Variations on this were the 'elephant's trunk' or the more extreme 'apache' (short on top, long at sides).

I see this choice of uniform as, initially, an attempt to buy status (since the clothes chosen were originally worn by upper-class dandies) which, being quickly aborted by a harsh social reaction (in 1954 second-hand Edwardian suits were on sale in various markets - see Rock and Cohen, 1970 - as they became rapidly unwearable by the upper-class dandies once the Teds had

taken them over as their own) was followed by an attempt to create their own style via the modifications just outlined.

This, then, was the Teds' one contribution to culture: their adoption and personal modification of Savile Row Edwardian suits. But more important than being a contribution to culture, since culture only has meaning when transposed into social terms, their dress represented a symbolic way of expressing and negotiating with their social reality; of giving cultural *meaning* to their social plight. And because of this, their touchiness to insults about dress becomes not only comprehensible but rational.

But what 'social reality' was their uniform both 'expressive of' and 'a negotiation with'? Unfortunately there is, as yet, no 'grammar' for decoding cultural symbols like dress and what follows is largely speculative. However, if one examines *the context from which the cultural symbol was probably extracted* - one possible way of formulating one aspect of such a grammar - then the adoption of, for example, the bootlace tie, begins to acquire social meaning. Probably picked up from the many American Western films viewed during this period where it was worn, most prevalently, as I remember them, by the slick city gambler whose social status was, grudgingly, high because of his ability to live *by his wits* and *outside* the traditional working class *mores* of society (which were basically rural and hardworking as opposed to urban and hedonistic), then I believe its symbolic cultural meaning for the Teds becomes explicable as both expression of their *social reality* (basically outsiders and forced to live by their wits) and their *social 'aspirations'* (basically an attempt to gain high, albeit grudging, status for an ability to live smartly, hedonistically and by their wits in an urban setting).

THE MEANING OF MOD
Dick Hebdige

Note: "The meaning of Mod" is the second extract from Dick Hebdige's study of sub-cultural styles in the 1960's. Here, in contrast with his piece on black culture (where the background is less familiar), Hebdige spends less time on a description of the 'Mod' style, and focusses instead on the modes of stylistic generation in Mod sub-culture. He examines the way objects and things were borrowed by the Mods from the world of consumer commodities, and their meaning transformed by the way they were reworked into a new stylistic ensemble. This involved expropriating the meanings given to things by the dominant consumer culture, and incorporating them in ways which expressed sub-cultural rather than dominant values. The study also suggests how the Mods raised consumption, the commodity, style itself to a new level - a sort of 'fetishising' of style, which produced the effect commonly described as 'narcissistic'. This analysis gives empirical substance to the argument that sub-cultures live their relation to their real situation as an 'imaginary' relation.

ITS APPEARANCE

Like most primitive vocabularies, each word of Wolverine[1], the universal Pop Newspeak, is a prime symbol and serves a dozen or a hundred functions of communication. Thus 'mod' came to refer to several distinct styles, being essentially an umbrella-term used to cover everything which contributed to the recently launched myth of 'swinging London'.

Thus groups of art-college students following in Mary Quant's footsteps and developing a taste for the outrageous in clothing were technically 'mods'[2], and Lord Snowdon earned the epithet when he appeared in a polo necked sweater and was hastily grouped with the 'new breed' of 'important people' like Bailey and Terrence Stamp who showed a 'swinging' disregard for certain dying conventions. But for our purposes, we must limit the definition of the mods to working class teenagers who lived mainly in London and the new towns of the South and who could be readily identified by characteristic hairstyles, clothing etc. According to Melly (1972), the progenitors of this style appear to have been a group of working class dandies, possibly descended from the devotees of the Italianate style; known throughout the trad world as mods who were dedicated to clothes and lived in London. Only gradually and with popularisation did this group accumulate other distinctive identity symbols (the scooter, the pills, the music). By 1963, the all night R and B clubs

held this group firmly to Soho and central London, whilst around the ring roads the Ton up boys thundered on unperturbed, nostalgically clinging on to rock and roll and the tougher working class values.

Whether the mod/rocker dichotomy was ever really essential to the self-definition of either group remains doubtful. The evidence suggests that the totally disparate goals and life styles of the two groups left very little room for interaction of any kind. After the disturbances of Whitsun 1964, at Clacton, in which hostilities between mods and rockers played no important part (the main targets for aggression being the pathetically inadequate entertainment facilities and small shopkeepers) the media accentuated and rigidified the opposition between the two groups, setting the stage for the conflicts which occurred at Margate and Brighton during the Easter weekend and at Hastings during the August Bank holiday[3]. The fact that the mod clashed before the camera with the rocker is, I suspect, more indicative of the mod's vanity than of any really deeply felt antagonism between the two groups. The mods rejected the rocker's crude conception of masculinity, the transparency of his motivations, his clumsiness, and embraced a less obvious style, which in turn was less easily ridiculed or dismissed by the parent culture. What distinguished the Bank Holidays of 1964 from all previous bank holidays was not the violence (this was a fairly regular feature) but the public debut of this style at the coastal resorts. The very visible presence at Margate, Brighton, and Hastings of thousands of disturbingly ordinary, even smart teenagers from London and its environs somehow seemed to constitute a threat to the old order (the retired colonels, the tourist-oriented tradesmen who dominated the councils of the south coast resorts). The mods, according to Laing,"looked alright but there was something in the way they moved which adults couldn't make out" (1969). They seemed to consciously invert the values associated with smart dress, to deliberately challenge the assumptions, to falsify the expectations derived from such sources. As Stan Cohen puts it, they were all the more disturbing by the impression they gave of "actors who are not quite in their places" (1973).

I shall go on now to analyse the origins of this style in the experience of the mods themselves by attempting to penetrate and decipher the mythology of the mods. Finally, I should like to offer an explanation of why an overtly inoffensive style could manage to project menace so effectively.

HALFWAY TO PARADISE ON THE PICCADILLY LINE

The mod's adoption of a sharp but neat and visually understated style can be explained only partly by his reaction to the rocker's grandiloquence. It is partly explained by his desire to do

justice to the mysterious complexity of the metropolis in his personal demeanour, to draw himself closer to the Negro whose very metabolism seemed to have grown into, and kept pace with that of the city. It is partly explained by his unique and subversive attitude toward the commodities he habitually consumed (more of this second point later).

The life style to which the mod ideally aspired revolved around night clubs and city centres which demanded a certain exquisiteness of dress. In order to cope with the unavoidable minute by minute harassments, the minutiae of highspeed interactions encumbent upon an active night-life in the city, the mod had to be on the ball at all times, functioning at an emotional and intellectual frequency high enough to pick up the slightest insult or joke or challenge or opportunity to make the most of the precious night. Thus speed[4] was needed to keep mind and body synchronised perfectly. His ideal model-mentor for this ideal style would be the Italian mafiosi-type so frequently depicted in crime films shot in New York (one step above London in the mod hierarchy). The Brooklyn sharp kid had been emulated by the wartime black marketeer, the "wide boy" and the post war "spiv" and the style was familiar, readily accessible and could be easily worked up. Alternatively, an equally acceptable, perhaps even more desirable image was projected by the Jamaican hustler (or later "rudie") whom the mod could see with increasing regularity as the decade wore on operating with an enviable "savoir-faire" from every available street-corner. Thus the pork-pie hat and dark glasses were at one time essential mod accessories. If the grey people (who oppressed and constricted both mod and negro) held a monopoly on daytime business, the blacks held more shares in the action of the night hours.[5]

Another and perhaps more pervasive influence can be traced to that of the indigenous British gangster style, the evolution of which coincides almost exactly with that of the mods[6]. With the introduction of the Gaming Laws in 1963, London had become a kind of European Las Vegas and offered rich rewards and a previously unattainable status to Britain's more enterprising criminals. The famous protection gangs of the Krays and the Richardsons (from East and South London respectively; both major breeding grounds of mod) began converging on the west end, and many working class teenagers followed their elders into the previously inviolable citadels of Soho and Westminster to see what fruits were offered. The city centre, transfigured and updated by the new nightlife, offered more opportunities for adventure and excitement to the more affluent working class youth; and the clandestine, intergang warfare, the ubiquitous, brooding menace, provided a more suitable background to the mod's ideal life-style. As the gangsters stuck faithfully to their classic Hollywood scripts, dressing in sober suits, adopting classic Capone

poses, using sawn off shotguns on each other, petrol bombing each other's premises, being seen in whispered consultation with bespectacled "consiglieres", Soho became the perfect soil on which thriller fiction fantasies and subterranean intrigue could thrive; and this was the stuff for which the mod lived and in which his culture was steeped[7]. It was as if the whole submerged criminal underworld had surfaced, in 1965, in the middle of London, and had brought with it its own submarine world of popular fiction, sex and violence fantasy. As it acquired power it explored the possibilities for realising those fantasies - the results were often bizarre and frequently terrifying. The unprecedented marriage between East and South London criminal cultures and West End high life and the Chelsea jet sets bore some strange and exotic fruit, and one of its most exquisite creatures was the Soho mod.

A MUGSHOT OF THE IDEAL MOD

In a *Sunday Times* magazine of April, 1964, Denzil, the seventeen year old mod interviewee fulfils the ideal mod role, 'looking excruciatingly sharp in all the photographs and describing an average week in the life of the ideal London mod.'

> Monday night meant dancing at the Mecca, the Hammersmith Palais, the Purley Orchard, or the Streatham Locarno.
> Tuesday meant Soho and the Scene club.
> Wednesday was Marquee night.
> Thursday was reserved for the ritual washing of the hair.
> Friday meant the Scene again.
> Saturday afternoon usually meant shopping for clothes and records, Saturday night was spent dancing and rarely finished before 9.00 or 10.00 Sunday morning.
> Sunday evening meant the Flamingo or, perhaps, if one showed signs of weakening, could be spent sleeping.

Even allowing for exaggeration the number of mods who managed to even approximate this kind of life could not exceed a few hundred, perhaps at most a few thousand. In fact probably no one possesses the super-human stamina (even with a ready supply of pills), let alone the hard cash which would be required to get a mod through this kind of schedule but the fact remains that Denzil did not let the side down. He has pushed the group-fantasy, projected the image of the impossible good life that everybody needed, right down and onto the indelible printed page. And meanwhile, every mod was preparing himself psychologically so that if the opportunity should arise, if the money was there, if Welwyn Garden City should be metamorphosed into Piccadilly Circus, he would be ready. Every mod was existing in a ghost world of gangsterism, luxurious clubs, and beautiful women even if reality only amounted to a draughty Parker anorak, a beaten up Vespa, and fish and chips out of a greasy bag.

A SNAPSHOT OF THE STANDARD MOD

The reality of mod life was somewhat less glamorous. The average Mod, according to the survey of the 43 Margate offenders interviewed by Barker and Little (1964) earned about £11 a week, was either a semi-skilled or more typically an office worker who had left Secondary-modern school at fifteen. Another large section of mods were employed as department store clerks, messengers, and occupied menial positions in the various service industries of the West end. The mods are often described as exploring the upward option, but it seems probable that this has been deduced incorrectly from the mod's fanatical devotion to appearance, and the tendency to boast when in a blocked or amphetamine-induced state. As Denzil says: "There's a lot of lying when you're blocked about the number of girls you go out with in the week, how much your suit costs, etc. ..."
The archetypal mod, would, I think, be more likely to be the eighteen year old interviewed in the Barker-Little sample whose only articulated ambition - to become the owner of a Mayfair drinking-club - towered so high above his present occupation as a meat porter that he no longer seriously entertained it; but had realistically if resentfully accepted society's appraisal of his worth ("more or less manual - that's all I am"), and existed purely for and through his leisure-time. The bell-boy hero in Pete Townshend's new rock opera about the mod experience - *Quadrophrenia* - is apparently, similarly resigned to an insignificant and servile role during the day, but is all the more determined to make up for it at night. Like the fifteen year old office boy in Wolfe's essay "The Noonday Underground" (Wolfe, 1969b) whose clothes are more exquisitely tailored than the bosses', the mod was determined to compensate for his relatively low position in the daytime status-stakes over which he had no control, by exercising complete dominion over his private estate - his appearance and choice of leisure pursuits.

The wide gap between the inner world where all was under control, contained and lit by self-love, and the outer world, where all was hostile, daunting, and loaded in "their" favour, was bridged by amphetamines[8]. Through the alchemy of "speed", the mod achieved a magical omnipotence, whereby the dynamics of his movements were magnified, the possibilities of action multiplied, their purposes illuminated. Amphetamine made life tolerable, "blocked" one's sensory channels so that action and risk and excitement were possible, kept one going on the endless round of consumption, and confined one's attention to the search, the ideal, the goal, rather than the attainment of the goal - relief rather than release. The Who's song *The Searcher* stresses the importance of the search-as-end-in-itself:

> I ain't gonna get what I'm after
> Till the day I die.

Speed suspended the disappointment when the search failed, inevitably, to turn up anything substantial and gave one the energy to pick up and start again. It also tended to retard mental and emotional development (by producing dependency, by working against communication stimulating incessant vocal at the expense of aural activity) whilst accelerating physical deterioration. The mod lived now and certainly paid later. As the mod was swept along the glossy surface of the sixties hopelessly attempting to extend himself through an endless succession of objects, he would realise at some point that his youth (perhaps the unstated and impossible goal) was by no means everlasting. Tommy, the pinball wizard would eventually, and with great reluctance, face up to the fact that the game was limited by time and that there were never any replays. Hence the mid sixties obsession with the processes of ageing apparent in the songs of The Who and the Rolling Stones (both Mod Heroes).

From The Who's *My Generation*, the theme song of the battlefields of 1964:

Things they do look awful cold
Hope I die 'fore I get old.

From the Rolling Stones record *Mother's Little Helper*, which deals with middle-aged amphetamine-addiction, an understandably predictable mod nightmare:

What a drag it is getting old.

And thus, finally we come to the elaborate consumer rituals of the mods, their apparently insatiable appetite for the products of the capitalist society in which they lived, their fundamental and inescapable confinement within that society.

Whilst not suggesting that the mod style had stumbled across any serious flaw in the monolith of capitalism, I shall now attempt to indicate how it did handle the commodities it took to itself in a unique and subversive manner. If it found no flaws it did at least come across a few hairline cracks. It did at least beat against the bars of its prison.

CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION AND THE TRANSFORMED COMMODITY

The mods are often charged by the self-styled commentators of pop with a debilitating tendency to multiple addiction. The argument goes something like this - being typically alienated consumers, the mods eagerly swallowed the latest brand of pills in order to borrow enough energy to enable them to spend the maximum amount of time consuming the maximum amount of commodities, which, in turn, could only be enjoyed whilst under the influence of speed. However, despite his overwhelming need to

consume, the mod was never a passive consumer, as his hedonistic middle-class descendant often was[9]. The importance of style to the mods can never be overstressed - Mod was pure, unadulterated STYLE, the essence of style. In order to project style it became necessary first to appropriate the commodity, then to redefine its use and value and finally to relocate its meaning within a totally different context. This pattern, which amounted to the semantic rearrangement of those components of the objective world which the mod style required, was repeated at every level of the mod experience and served to preserve a part at least of the mod's private dimension against the passive consumer role it seemed in its later phases ready to adopt .....

Thus the scooter, a formerly ultra-respectable means of transport was appropriated and converted into a weapon and a symbol of solidarity. Thus pills, medically diagnosed for the treatment of neuroses, were appropriated and used as an end-in-themselves, and the negative evaluations of their capabilities imposed by school and work were substituted by a positive assessment of their personal credentials in the world of play (i.e. the same qualities which were assessed negatively by their daytime controllers - e.g. laziness, arrogance, vanity etc. - were positively defined by themselves and their peers in leisure time).

Thus, the mods learned to make their criticisms obliquely, having learned by experience (at school and work) to avoid direct confrontations where age, experience, economic and civil power would inevitably have told against them. The style they created, therefore, constituted a parody of the consumer society in which they were situated. The mod dealt his blows by inverting and distorting the images (of neatness, of short hair) so cherished by his employers and parents, to create a style, which while being overtly close to the straight world was nonetheless incomprehensible to it.

The mod triumphed with symbolic victories and was the master of the theatrical but ultimately enigmatic gesture. The Bank Holiday incidents, and the November 5th, 1966, scooter-charge on Buckingham Palace (a scarcely remembered and largely unreported event of major importance to the mods involved) whilst holding a certain retrospective fascination for the social historian and calling forth an Agincourt-like pride in those who took part, fail to impress us as permanently significant events, and yet an eighteen year old mod could say at the time about Margate: "Yes, I was there ... It was like we were taking over the country" (quoted in Booker, 1969).

The basis of style is the appropriation and reorganisation by the subject of elements in the objective world which would

otherwise determine and constrict him. The mod's cry of triumph, quoted above, was for a romantic victory, a victory of the imagination; ultimately for an imagined victory. The mod combined previously disparate elements to create himself into a metaphor, the appropriateness of which was apparent only to himself. But the mods underestimated the ability of the dominant culture to absorb the subversive image and sustain the impact of the anarchic imagination. The magical transformations of commodities had been mysterious and were often invisible to the neutral observer and no amount of stylistic incantation could possibly affect the oppressive economic mode by which they had been produced. The state continued to function perfectly no matter how many of Her Majesty's colours were defiled and draped around the shoulders of skinny pill-heads in the form of sharply cut jackets.

AUTOPSY REPORT ON ONE WHITE NEGRO NOW DECEASED:

I have already emphasised the positive values of the mod's relative exclusiveness, his creation of a whole supportive universe which provided him not only with a distinctive dress, music, etc. but also with a complete set of meanings. I should like to conclude by suggesting that it was this same esotericism, this same retreatism which led to the eventual and inevitable decline of mod as a movement. For the mod was the first all-British White Negro of Mailer's essay (1968), living on the pulse of the present, resurrected after work only by a fierce devotion to leisure, and creating through the dynamics of his own personality (or more accurately through the dynamics of the collective personality of the group), a total style armed, albeit inadequately, against a patronising adult culture, and which need look no further than itself for its justifications and its ethics. Ultimately it was this very self-sufficiency which led to the Mod's self-betrayal. Being determined to cling to the womb of the Noonday Underground, the smokefilled clubs and the good life without ever facing the implications of its own alienation and to look merely to its own created and increasingly commercialised (and therefore artificial and stylised) image, mesmerised by music, stultified by speed, Mod was bound eventually to succumb; to be cheated and exploited at every level. The consumer rituals were refined and multiplied ad infinitum and came to involve the use of commodities directed specifically at a mod market by a rapidly expanding pop industry. Dress was no longer innovative - nobody "discovered" items like levi jeans or hush puppies any more. Style was manufactured from above instead of being spontaneously created from within. When a mod magazine could declare authoritatively that there was a "NEW MOD WALK: feet out, head forward, hands in jacket pockets", then one had to acknowledge, reluctantly, that this particular white negro had, somewhere along the line, keeled over and died.

FOOTNOTES

1. A reference to the language of Tom Wolfe. See, for examples of his work: Wolfe (1966;1969a; 1969b; 1971).
2. The current fashion for camp rock derives much of its creative impetus from the extreme narcissism and self-conscious urbanity of this group. Bowie and Bolan were among its more conspicuous members.
3. For a full account of the role of the media, and other elements in the 'societal reaction', in the creation of the mod/rocker dichotomy see: Cohen (1973).
4. I use the term to cover "blues", "purple hearts", "black bombers", dexedrine, benzedrine, ephedrine and methedrine which were easily available to the mods in the mid 60's.
5. The 'hard mods' especially emulated the negro and this emulation became explicit in the style of their direct descendants - the skinheads.
6. With the conviction of the Krays in 1969 and the introduction of new and more restrictive gambling legislation in the same year, this style took a crippling blow.
7. This is not so far fetched as it may at first appear. The mid-60's gangsterism was a game, a serious, highly dangerous and profitable game, but a game nevertheless, the rules of which had been fixed in a mythical Hollywood-Chicago years before. The effectiveness of an extortion racket depends primarily on its flair for publicity; on a consistent projection of mean psychopath (Richard Widmark-type) roles; on its convincing presentation of a real yet ultimately unspecifiable menace. It functions through the indulgence of all those who come into contact with it in a popular fantasy and adheres rigidly to the conventions of that fantasy. It is in a word, living cinema. Overstated and oversimplified, I know, but for a detailed elaboration of this point, see my *stencilled paper* No. 25., CCCS, University of Birmingham.
8. For confirmation of the centrality of speed in the mod's life-style one need look no further than to the cultural significance assigned to the scooter, the first innovative means of transport introduced by a British youth sub-culture (the motor bike was borrowed from the States). The verb 'to go' was included in both "Ready Steady Go" and "Whole Scene Going", the two mod programmes and testifies to the importance of movement.
9. The distinction between the two styles can best be illustrated by comparing the major symbolic exhibitions of the mod's solidarity - the Bank Holiday gathering, with its equivalent in Hippie Culture - the festival. At the coast the mods were impatiently reacting *against* the passivity of the crowd; each mod was a creative subject capable of entertaining an unimaginative adult audience arrogantly displaying the badge of his identity to a nation of featureless picture-watchers. The hippie's festivals, on the other hand, deliberately avoided contact with other cultures (when contact did occur, as at Altamont, it was often disastrous), were conducted in remote locations in a complacent atmosphere of mutual self-congratulation, and centred round the passive consumption of music produced by an elite of untouchable superstars (c.f. Eisen, ed., 1970, for a collection of essays describing how several thousand spectators failed to do anything

about a few score outlaw bikers). If this comparison seems unfair we need only look to the mods' consumption of R and B and Tamla Motown in their clubs. The mods never consumed their music statically (the hippies generally *sat* and watched) but would *use* the music as a catalyst for their own creative efforts on the dance floor, even dancing alone if need be. Perhaps the distinction can be formulated in two equations:

WORKING-CLASS + MOD + SPEED = ACTION

MIDDLE-CLASS + HIPPIE + MARIJUANA = PASSIVITY.

THE SKINHEADS & THE MAGICAL RECOVERY OF COMMUNITY

John Clarke

Note: *In this extract from his longer study of 'Skinhead culture' John Clarke describes the way this sub-culture focuses around the notions of 'community' and 'territory'. Skinhead culture selectively reaffirms certain core values of traditional working class culture, and this affirmation is expressed both in dress, style and appearance, and in activities. The reaffirmation is a symbolic, rather than a 'real' attempt to recreate some aspects of the 'parent' culture. The preoccupation in Skinhead culture with territory, with football and 'fanship', and with a particular kind of masculinity thus represents what Clarke calls their 'magical recovery of community'. See also the use of this example in Clarke's MA Thesis, "Reconceptualising Youth Culture" (CCCS. Birmingham) and in "Skinheads and Youth Culture" (CCCS Stencilled Paper No. 23).*

Our basic thesis about the Skinheads centres around the notion of community. We would argue that the Skinhead style represents an attempt to re-create through the 'mob' the traditional working class community, as a substitution for the *real* decline of the latter. The underlying social dynamic for the style, in this light, is the relative worsening of the situation of the working class, through the second half of the sixties, and especially the more rapidly worsening situation of the lower working class (and of the young within that). This, allied to the young's sense of exclusion from the existing 'youth sub-culture' (dominated in the public arena by the music and styles derived from the 'underground') produced a return to an intensified "Us-Them" consciousness among the lower working class young, a sense of being excluded and under attack from a variety of points. The resources to deal with this sense of exclusion were not to be found within either the emergent or incorporated elements of youth sub-cultures, but only in those images and behaviours which stressed a more traditional form of collective solidarity. Material from *The Paint House* illustrates this sense of oppression:

> Everywhere there are fucking bosses, they're always trying to tell you what to do ... don't matter what you do, where you go, they're always there. People in authority, the people who tell you what to do and make sure you do it. It's the system we live in, its the governor system.

Schools, you 'ave to go, doncha? The teachers and the headmaster, they're the authority, ain't they? They're telling you what to do and you're glad to get out and leave and that, aren't ya? They think because you're young and they pay you and that, that they can treat you how they like and say what they want. Then there's the 'old bill' and courts ... they're all part of authority. Official and all kinds of people in uniforms. Anyone with a badge on, traffic wardens and council and all that ... yeah, even the caretaker at the flats, they even 'as goes at you. Then when you finish at work or at school, you go to the clubs and the youth leaders are all just a part of it.
(Daniel and McGuire, eds., 1972: 67).

But the skinheads felt oppressed by more than just the obvious authority structure; they resented those who tried to get on and "give themselves false airs", people from within the neighbourhood who had pretensions to social superiority; they resented the "people on our backs":

All these dummoes at school, who always do what they're told ... they're the ones who end up being coppers and that.
I hate them do-gooders who come to ' 'elp the poor in them slums ...' They're all nice and sweet and kind, they pretend to be on your side and by talking nicely find out about you but social workers and people like that, they ain't on your side. They think they knew how you should live. They're really authority pretending to be your friends. They try to get you to do things and if you don't do them, they've got the law on their side.
With all this lot against us, we've still got the yids, Pakis, wogs, 'ippies on our backs. (ibid: 68).

The sense of being "in the middle" of this variety of oppressive and exploitative forces produces a need for group solidarity, which though essentially defensive, in the Skinheads was coupled with an aggressive content, the expression of frustration and discontent through the attacking of scapegoated outsiders. The content of this solidarity, as we shall see in our consideration of the elements of the skinhead style, derived from the traditional content of the working class community - the example, *par excellence*, of the defensively organised collective.

However, the skinhead style does not revive the community in a real sense; the post-war decline of the bases of that community had removed it as a real source of solidarity; the skinheads had to use an *image* of what that community was as the basis of their style. They were the 'dispossessed inheritors'; they received a tradition which had been deprived of its real social bases. The themes and imagery still persisted, but the reality was in a state of decline and disappearance. We would suggest that this dislocated relation to the traditional community accounts for the exaggerated and intensified form which the values and concerns of that community received in the form of the skinhead style. Daniel and McGuire claim that:

Rather than a community spirit, the Collinwood gang tends to have an affinity with an image of the East Enders, as being tough, humorous and a subculture of their own ... The gang sees itself as a natural continuation of the working class tradition of the area, with the same attitudes and behaviour as their parents and

grandparents before them. They believe that they have the same stereotyped prejudices against immigrants and aliens as they believe their parents have and had, *but they play these roles outside of the context of the community experienced by their parents* .... (ibid: 21-22. Our emphasis).

These observations are reinforced by comments from the Skinheads themselves about the gang and its relation to the locality:

When people kept saying skinheads, when they're talking about the story of us coming up from the East End, this has happened for generations before, past ... I mean where does skinhead come into it?
It's a community, a gang, isn't it, it's only another word for community, kids, thugs, whatever ... (ibid: 21; 31).

The kids inherit the oral tradition of the area from the parent culture, especially that part which refers to the community's self -image, its collective solidarity, its conception of masculinity, its orientation to "outsiders" and so on. It is perhaps not surprising that the area with which the Skinheads are most associated should be the East End, which from a sociological standpoint has been seen as the archetypal working class community. Its internal self-image has always been a particularly strong one, and has been strengthened by its public reputation as a 'hard' area, a reputation which in the mid-sixties was further intensified by the glamorous careers of the Krays.

Finally, we would like to exemplify this relation between the Skinheads and the image of the community through some of the central elements of the skinhead style. One of the most crucial aspects is the emphasis on territorial connections for the Skinheads - the "Mobs" were organised on a territorial basis, identifying themselves with and through a particular locality (e.g. the "Smethwick Mob", etc.). This involved the Mobs in the demarcation and defence of their particular 'patch', marking boundaries with painted slogans ("Quinton Mob rules here", etc.), and maintaining those boundaries against infractions by other groups. This territoriality, like the community, has its own focal points around which interaction articulates - the street corner meeting place, the pub, and the football ground. Although the football ground did not necessarily coincide with the mobs' patches, its own local identification and the already existent activities of the Ends provided a particular focal point for the Mobs to organise around.

Football, and especially the violence articulated around it, also provided one arena for the expression of the Skinheads' concern with a particular, collective, masculine self conception, involving an identification of masculinity with physical toughness, and an unwillingness to back down in the face of "trouble"[1]. The violence also involved the Mobs' stress on collective solidarity and mutual support in times of 'need'. This concern with toughness was also involved in the two other most publicised

skinhead activities - "Paki-Bashing" and "Queer-Bashing". Paki-bashing involved the ritual and aggressive defence of the social and cultural homogeneity of the community against its most obviously scapegoated outsiders - partly because of their particular visibility within the neighbourhood (in terms of shop ownership patterns, etc.) by comparison with West Indians, and also because of their different cultural patterns (especially in terms of their unwillingness to defend themselves and so on) - again by comparison with West Indian youth.

"Queer-Bashing" may be read as a reaction against the erosion of traditionally available stereotypes of masculinity, especially by the hippies. The Skinhead operational definition of "queer" seems to have extended to all those males who by their standards looked "odd", as this statement from a Smethwick Skinhead may indicate:

> Usually it'd be just a bunch of us who'd find somebody they thought looked odd - like this one night we were up by Warley Woods and we saw this bloke who looked odd - he'd got long hair and frills on his trousers.

We may see these three interrelated elements of territoriality, collective solidarity and 'masculinity' as being the way in which the Skinheads' attempted to recreate the inherited imagery of the community in a period in which the experiences of increasing oppression demanded forms of mutual organisation and defence. And we might finally see the intensive violence connected with the style as evidence of the 'recreation of the community' being indeed a 'magical' or 'imaginary' one, in that it was created without the material and organisational basis of that community and consequently was less subject to the informal mechanisms of social control characteristic of such communities. In the skinhead style we can see both the elements of continuity (in terms of the style's content), and discontinuity (in terms of its form), between parent culture and youth subculture.

FOOTNOTE

1. For fuller accounts of the changes in football during the post-war period, which had some bearing on the Skinhead choice of this particular locale, see, for example, Taylor (1971a and 1971b) and Critcher (1975).

DOING NOTHING
Paul Corrigan

Note: *Paul Corrigan's study of Sunderland street-corner culture, The Smash Street Kids, is shortly to be published by Paladin. It testifies to the intense activity which is involved in the common pursuit of 'doing nothing', and to the fact that what most adults see as an endless waste of time, an absence of purpose, is, from the viewpoint of the kids, full of incident, constantly informed by 'weird ideas'. Corrigan argues - and shows in this extract - that much the most common and intense activity engaged in by the majority of working class kids is the simple but absorbing activity of 'passing the time'.*

For most kids where it's at is the street; not the romantic action packed streets of the ghetto but the wet pavements of Wigan, Shepherds Bush and Sunderland. The major activity in this venue, the main action of British subculture is, in fact, 'doing nothing'.

> What sort of things do you do with your mates?
> DUNCAN: Just stand around talking about footy. About things.
> Do you do anything else?
> DUNCAN: Joke, lark about, carry on. Just what we feel like really.
> What's that?
> DUNCAN: Just doing things. Last Saturday someone started throwing bottles and we all got in.
> What happened?
> DUNCAN: Nothing really.

All these activities come under the label of 'doing nothing' and they represent the largest and most complex youth subculture. The major element in doing nothing is talking. Not the arcane discussion of the T.V. talk show, but recounting, exchanging stories which need never be true or real but which are as interesting as possible. About football, about each other, talking not to communicate ideas, but to communicate the experience of talking. It passes the time and it underlines the group nature of the different ways that the boys have of passing the time. A great deal of joking goes on. It was between the area of talking, joking and carrying on that things emerged that the boys called 'weird ideas'

> Do you ever go out and knock around with the lads?
> ALBERT: Sometimes when I feel like it.
> What do you do?
> ALBERT: Sometimes we get into mischief.
> Mischief?
> ALBERT: Well somebody gets a weird idea into their head, and they start to carry it out, and others join in.

Weird idea?

ALBERT: Things ... like going around smashing milk bottles.

It is the 'weird idea' that represents the major something in 'doing nothing'. In fighting boredom the kids do not choose the street as a wonderfully lively place, rather they look on it as the place where there is the most chance that something will happen. Doing nothing on the street must be compared with the alternatives: for example, knowing that nothing will happen with Mum and Dad in the front room; being almost certain that the youth club will be full of boredom. This makes the street the place where something might just happen, if not this Saturday, then surely next.

The weird ideas then are born out of boredom and the expectation of future and continuing boredom, and this affects the sort of weird ideas that they are. A good idea must contain the seeds of continuing change as well as excitement and involvement. Smashing milk bottles is a good example of this since it typifies the way in which they are put into effect. To ask the kids why they smash milk bottles is to ask a meaningless question.

What do you do on street corners?

DICK: Police never saw us do anything wrong, so they shouldn't pick on us. But we just used to play around, smashing things.

What sort of things?

DICK: Anything really - I dunno why - just ideas.

The answer to the last question, for example, is not really possible within the boys' own terms, outside of the total experience of the time. For we are not talking about boys going out on a Saturday night looking for milk bottles to smash, rather it is purely an interesting thing that occurs.

What do you do when you just knock around the streets?

RICHARD: Sometimes we get into fights, or trouble, but mostly nothing much.

Just try and give us an example.

RICHARD: Er ... last Saturday we was hanging about and someone kicked a bottle over and it smashed. Then we all started smashing bottles.

And lest someone should build a model of deviancy amplification around the smashing of milk bottles, other smashing objects are included in the weird ideas.

EDWARD: I've been in trouble recently because my friends smashed a shop window, but that's all.

STEVEN: Well you know the Grand Prix down there. Well, we duff up the machines and get free goes on them. You know the corporation buses, well, they go in for a cup of tea and we'll go and open the doors and kick the buses in.

The other major component of 'doing nothing' is fighting. Within this context fights are an important and exciting occasion - they are easy to create and are interesting events; they don't carry too many risks. For some of the boys it

represents a casual occurrence; for others it was the major occurrence of every Saturday night - for them it was the biggest element of nothing.

What do you do on an average Saturday night?

DAVE: Saturday night, why, er, we usually go down an off-licence and get something to drink, some cider or some beer. We usually go around me mate's place and play records, watch telly and then just knock around.

What do you do when you are knocking about?

DAVE: Just kick about, play football or something, cause a bit of mischief around the streets.

Mischief?

DAVE: Well, we just seem to get into it on the streets.

Do you ever get into any fights?

DAVE: No ... well not many.

It would be useless to try and explain why these fights occur. Given nothing to do, something happens, even if it is a yawn; or someone stumbling into someone else; someone remembering an ancient insult; and it's this that brings about the fights. Something pathetic and forgotten outside of 'nothing' becomes vital within that set of behaviour.

There are some other kids though where fights are a bit more likely to happen.

What do you do on an average Saturday evening?

FRED: I go down the station, you know in the Town Centre, and shoot through to Newcy, a whole gang of us. Then we walk around Newcy, ready for trouble. We find a few Maggie supporters and kick them in. Have a good scrap we do.

What sort of fights?

FRED: Well not real fights, as some of them might be quite matey, but still, when you put the boot in, you put the boot in, but we are friendly after like.

What do you do on an average Saturday evening?

PAUL: I knock around in a gang and we get into fights, scraps ... you know ...

What sort of fights?

PAUL: Well we meet up with another gang and start chucking milk bottles at them. Mainly the South Hylton Gang.

Why do you do that?

PAUL: So they can't get near us.

What happens when they do?

PAUL: We have a scrap. It's good fun.

Do people get hurt?

PAUL: No.

These fights are less spontaneous than the others, but they still arise out of Saturday's 'Nothing' rather than any territorial or group factor on its own. Their context defines the nature of the fight. If those fights were *real*, the streets of British cities would be littered with corpses. They are merely something ... in nothing.

5. The child-rearing theme is discussed in Berger, Hackett and Millar (1972), Bookhagen et. al. (1973) and Zicklin (1973).
6. See Rigby (1974a and b) and the journal *Resurgence*. Otherwise there is very little published research on this theme. For the religious-utopian tradition see Cohn (1971), Roszak (1972), and, again for sheer depth of understanding, Bloch (1970 and 1971). For a survey of contemporary influences on youthful/counter-cultural mysticism and religion, see Needleman (1971). Also look at the movement publications of the various sects.
7. On Kommunes 1 and 2 see Bookhagen et. al. (1973) and Reiche (1968). On squatting see, for example, Bailey (1973), and on the related European student movement see Statera (1975).
8. See the journals and magazines cited in the text. Here there is little published research apart from the eschatological - chiliast influences already cited, but see Schumacher (1974), Harper (ed., forthcoming), and Bookchin (1971).
9. See Rigby (1974a and b), Cooper (1967, 1972 and 1974) and Laing (1967). Also the magazine of the Encounter movement: *Self and Society*.

REGGAE, RASTAS & RUDIES

Dick Hebdige

Note: *This is an extract from a longer study of "Reggae, Rastas and Rudies: Style and the Subversion of Form", by Dick Hebdige, and forms part of his MA Thesis, "Aspects of Style in the Deviant Sub-Cultures of the 1960's". The full-length chapter and other papers from this thesis are available among the CCCS* Stencilled *Papers, Nos. 20, 21, 24 and 25. The extract deals mainly with the Jamaican cultural context: the structure of Ras Tafarian beliefs: its envelopment in musical form, especially ska and reggae: the social and cultural meaning of the music: its transplantation to Britain; its partial incorporation by white Skinheads, and its use by black 'rude boys' to subvert and resist incorporation. The extract omits a fuller analysis of Ras Tafarian beliefs and its recent history as a movement; a discussion of the importance and use by 'rude boy culture' of elements from the Hollywood gangster film; an analysis of the inter-relationships between 'black' and East End culture in Britain; and a section on method - all included in the longer version of the Chapter.*

I Babylon on Beeston Street

> The bars they could not hold me,
> Walls could not control me.
> from The Wailer's *Duppy Conqueror*

> I was born with the English language and it proved to be my enemy.
> James Baldwin (in interview).

> Revolution soon - come.
> Bulldog quoted in Thomas (1973)

The experience of slavery recapitulates itself perpetually in the everyday interactions of the Jamaican black. It is principally responsible for the unstable, familial structure (disrupting the traditionally strong kinship networks which even now survive among the peoples of West Africa) and obviously goes on determining patterns of work and relations with authority. It remains an invisible shaping presence which haunts the slums of Ghost Town and even now defies exorcism. In fact it is

interpolated into every verbal exchange which takes place on the teeming streets of every Jamaican slum. As Hiro (1973) points out: "the evolution of the creole language was related directly to the mechanics of slavery". Communication was systematically blocked by the white overseer who banded slaves of different tribes together on the plantations so that cultural links with Africa were effectively severed. The laws which forbade the teaching of English to slaves meant that the new language was secretly appropriated (by rough approximation, by lip reading, etc.) and transmitted orally. The 17th century English spoken by the master class was refracted through the illicit channels of communication available to the black and used to embody the subterranean semantics of a nascent culture which developed in direct defiance of the master's wishes. Distortion was inevitable, perhaps even deliberate.

Subsequently, the language developed its own vocabulary, syntax and grammar; but it remains essentially a shadow-language fulfilling in a more exaggerated and dramatic way those require-ments, which, under normal circumstances, are satisfied by region-al working-class accents and group *argot*. Form implicitly dictates content, and poles of meaning, fixed immutably in a bitter and irreversible experience, silently reconstruct that experience in everyday exchange. As we shall see later, this fact is intuitively grasped by the members of certain West Indian subcultures, and language is used as a particularly effective means of resisting assimilation and preventing infiltration by members of the dominant groups. As a screening device it has proved to be invaluable; and the "Bongo talk" and patois of the Rude Boy deliberately emphasise its subversive rhythms so that it becomes an aggressive assertion of racial and class identities. As a living index to the extent of the black's alienation from the cultural norms and goals of those who occupy higher positions in the social structure, the creole language is unique.

The expulsion of the black from the wider linguistic community meant that a whole culture evolved by a secret and forbidden osmosis. Deprived of any legitimate cultural exchange, the slave developed an excessive individualism and a set of cultural artefacts which together represent the vital symbolic transactions which had to be made between slavery and freedom, between his material condition and his spiritual life, between his experience of Jamaica and his memories of Africa. In a sense, the trans-ition was never satisfactorily accomplished, and the black Jamaican remains suspended uneasily between two worlds neither of which commands a total commitment. Unable to repair this cultural and psychological breach, he tends to oscillate violently from one world to the other and ultimately he idealises both. Ultimately, indeed, he is exiled from Jamaica, from Afri-ca, from Britain and from Brixton, and sacrifices his place in

the real world to occupy an exalted position in some imaginative inner dimension where action dissolves into being, where movement is invalidated and difficult at the best of times, where solutions are religious rather than revolutionary.

In fact, the initial rationalisations of slavery took an explicitly religious form. Barred from the white man's churches, the slave learnt the Christian doctrine obliquely and grafted it, with varying degrees of success, onto the body of pagan beliefs which he had carried over from Africa. The residual supersti-tions (voodoo, witchcraft, etc.) persist even now beneath the surface of the Christian faith and periodically reassert them-selves in their original forms in the hills and rural areas of Jamaica, and are resurrected in the music of the more esoteric city-based bands[1]. The schools of Christian worship native to Jamaica still retain the ancient practices of the trance, spirit-possession, and "speaking in tongues", and these Churches (the Pentecostal Church, the Church of God in Christ, etc.) continue to attract enormous congregations. As a means of consolidating group ties and of articulating a group response to slavery, these nonconformist churches were to prove very valuable indeed. By appealing at once to the individual (by subscribing to the doctrine of personal "grace") and to the group (by promising collective redemption), they provided an irresistible solution - a means not of closing the gulf but of transcending it completely. The Bible offered limitless scope for improvi-sation and interpretation. The story of Moses leading the suffering Israelites out of captivity was immediately applicable and won a permanent place in the mythology of the Jamaican black. The various cults pursued the ambiguous apocalypse along exactly those paths traced out elsewhere by Norman Cohn, (1970), proclaim-ing at different times divine revolutions, *postmortem* revelations. Whenever God seemed to be procrastinating, there were always the chiliastic cults of the rural areas ready to hurry things up. Even now, on occasion "Pocomania" (literally "a little madness") spreads with brief but devastating effect through the townships of the hills, and the Revival is, of course, always there to be revived. A million millennia counted out in days and months and minutes have come and gone and still God speaks to wild-eyed men in dreams. Judgment Day, the Day of Turnabout is never remote: it is always the day after tomorrow. And Judgement Day is dear to the heart of every Rasta and every Rudie; and for these it means the redistribution of an exclusively secular power.

The displacement of material problems onto a spiritual plane is of course by no means peculiar to the black Jamaican. The ways in which this essentially religious perspective is trans-muted into a utopian-existentialist one are, perhaps, more extraordinary and certainly more pertinent to the phenomenon

under consideration here. Christianity still permeates the West Indian imagination, and a Biblical mythology continues to dominate, but at certain given points in the social structure (namely, among the unemployed young and the deviant adult population) this mythology has been turned back upon itself so that the declared ascendancy of Judaeo-Christian culture (with its emphasis on work and repression) can be seriously scrutinised and ultimately rejected. Instrumental in this symbolic reversal were the Rastafarians.

The Rastafarians believe that the exiled Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethopia was God and that his accession to the Ethiopian throne fulfils the prophecy made by Marcus Garvey, "Look to Africa, when a black king shall be crowned, for the day of deliverance is near." But the religious milieu in which Rastafarianism was evolved demanded a specifically Biblical mythology and this mythology had to be re-appropriated and made to serve a different set of cultural needs, just as the "Protestant Ethic" in Western Europe had performed its own re-appropriation of the original Judaic form. By a dialectical process of redefinition, the Scriptures, which had constantly absorbed and deflected the revolutionary potential of the Jamaican black, were used to locate that potential, to negate the Judaeo-Christian culture. Or, in the more concise idiom of the Jamaican street-boys, the Bible was taken, read and "flung back rude".

Thus, Haile Selassie was not only the Ras Tafari, the Negus, the King of Kings, and the Living God, but also specifically the Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah. (More recently, the simple appèllation "Jah" has been used.) In these formulations the racial and religious problems which had preoccupied the Jamaican black for centuries converged and found immediate and simultaneous resolution. Predictably, the cult drew its support chiefly from the slums of Kingston. The U.C.W.I. research paper of 1960, *The Ras Tafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica*, reporting a first-hand study of the movement, managed to set out a broad base of beliefs common to all Rastafarians (M. G. Smith et al. 1960). The four point manifesto went as follows:

1. Ras Tafari is the Living God
2. Ethiopia is the black man's home.
3. Repatriation is the way of redemption for black men. It has been foretold and will occur shortly.
4. The ways of the white man are evil, especially for the black.

The most striking feature is how the Biblical metaphors have been elaborated into a total system - a code of seeing - at once

supple and holistic, universal in application, and lateral in direction. The black races are interpreted as the true Israelites and Solomon and Sheba are the black ancestors of Haile Selassie, the black god. Babylon really covers the western world (though many locksmen exclude Russia which has been identified as the Bear with three ribs which "will come to stamp up the residue thereof so that Babylon shall be a desolation among the nations" - *Revelation* XVIII). The police, the Church, and the Government (particularly old political leaders like Bustamante and the elder Manley) are the agents of imperialism and will share the terrible fate of the white oppressors. Ethiopia is the true name for all Africa. Since 1655, the white man and his brown ally have held the black man in slavery; and although physical slavery was abolished in 1838, it continues in a disguised form. All black men are Ethiopians and the Jamaican Government is not their government. It subordinates itself to Great Britain which still regards Jamaica as a colony. The only true government is the theocracy of the Emperor Haile Selassie, though Communism is much more desirable than capitalism - which is the system of Babylon. Marriage in church is sinful and the true Ethiopian should merely live with a black "Queen" whom he should treat with the utmost respect. (She, for her part, must never straighten her hair.) Alcohol is forbidden, as is gambling. Jamaican beliefs in obeah, magic and witchcraft are superstitious nonsense and have no empirical validity. Revivalism compounds mental slavery. Ganja is sacred. Worldly possessions are not necessary in Jamaica and the individual ownership of property is frowned upon. Work is good but alienated labour is quite simply a perpetuation of slavery All brethren are reincarnations of ancestral slaves; reincarnation is the reaffirmation of a lost culture and tradition. All brethren who regard Ras Tafari as God, regard man as God. 'Men' are mortal sinners and oppressors. 'Man' are those who know the Living God, the brethren and are immortal and One, living eternally in the flesh of all brethren - (One Locksman will address another as "bra" (brother) and will double up the first person singular "I and I" - instead of using the "you and I" construction).

Beyond these "certainties" which remain relatively static, the locksman habitually resorts to the rhetorical modes of the Bible - the riddle, the paradox, the parable - to demonstrate that he is in possession of the "true word". Michael Thomas (1973) quotes a hermetic locksman called Cunchyman who tells how he has conquered the tyranny of work by "capturing" an axe (which can kill thirteen men who use it for chopping wood all their lives) and hanging it on the wall. In an interview with *Rolling Stone*, in 1973, Bob Marley, the Rasta Leader of the "Wailers" (perhaps the first reggae band with a truly international following) shows how "destruction come outta material things" by using his guitar as a reified metaphor (the guitar plays beautiful music but it

can kill if there is a short circuit). Such syncretic and associative patterns of thought make all knowledge immediately (i.e. magically) accessible. Thus, when sufficiently stoned, the locksman will, as Michael Thomas (1973) asserts, discuss literally anything (e.g. which is more powerful - lightning or electricity; which is faster - the shark or the porpoise) with all the casuistry and conviction of a Jesuit priest. Ultimately, technology capitulates to belief; belief succumbs to knowledge; and thought is really felt. At this point, a harmonious relationship between the inner and outer dimensions is made possible and the "bra" is said to "head rest (or "in-dwell") with Jah." This explicit identification with the Godhead automatically demands a denial of linear systems; an end to all distinctions, and invites an extreme subjectivism. Mysticism, of course, means stasis, and the movement suffered ultimately from the quietist position towards which it naturally inclined[2]. The conversion of science into poetry did not lead to the expected redistribution of real power (even though this power was merely "apparent"; in Rastafarian mythology, a "figment" of Babylonian "vanity")[3]. But the crucial act of faith constitutes an archetypal technique of appropriation which escaped the traditional religious displacement by grounding God; it entailed a radical reappraisal of the black Jamaican's potential and enabled the locksman to reassess his position in society. And if all this seems a little too esoteric, we need only turn to the Rude Boy to confirm the validity of the Rasta perspective. For the secularisation of the Rasta Godhead coincided with the politicisation of the dispossed Rude Boy, and the new aesthetic which directed and organised the locksman's perceptions, found a perfect form in reggae.

2 Music and the overthrow of form

> A hungry man becomes an angry man.
> A rude boy quoted in White (1967)

> Preacher man say Great God come down from the sky
> Make every body feel happy, make everybody feel high.
> But if you know what life is worth
> You will look for yours on earth.
> So now I seen the light
> I'm gonna stand up for me rights.
> From the Wailer's *Get up, Stand up for Your Rights*

Reggae itself is polymorphous - and to concentrate upon one component at the expense of all others involves a reduction of what are complex cultural processes. Thus, reggae is transmogrified American 'soul' music, with an overlay of salvaged African rhythms, and an undercurrent of pure Jamaican rebellion. Reggae is transplanted Pentecostal. Reggae is the Rasta hymnal,

the heart cry of the Kingston Rude Boy, as well as the nativised national anthem of the new Jamaican government. The music is all these things and more - a mosaic which incorporates all the strands that make up black Jamaican culture; the call and response patterns of the Pentecostal Church, the devious scansion of Jamaican street talk, the sex and the cool of U.S. R. and B., the insistent percussion of the locksmen's jam-sessions, all find representation in reggae.

Even the etymology of the word "reggae" invites controversy. In Michael Thomas (1973), Bulldog, a rude boy who has made the grade in West Kingston, claims that it was derived from "ragga" which was an "uptown" way of saying "raggamuffin" and that the implied disapproval was welcomed by those who had liked the music. Alternatively, there have been readings which stress the similarity with the word *raga* (the Indian form) and still others which claim that reggae is simply a distortion of Reco (who, with Don Drummond, was one of the original "ska" musicians). The emergence of the music itself has provoked even fiercer debate, and one's response to the music depends upon whether one believes the music evolved spontaneously out of a group experience or as part of a conscious policy of "nativisation" dictated from above. Patterson (1964) tends to play down the folk-aspects of reggae and gives a correspondingly unsympathetic account of Rastafarianism (which he interprets as mystification through "group fantasy"). Kallyndyr and Dalrymple (undated) mention only those folk-aspects, and tend to be somewhat uncritical. In McGlashan (1973), the King (a leading sound-system man amongst the black British community) offers a characteristically unempirical and metaphorical explanation which provides another prime example of Rasta 'logic'.

> Reggae is protest, formed out of suffering ... You got to have that hard strong feeling ... That feeling come from mothers' breast, man, the breast milk. It's true! ... the natural milk comes from the mother's breast, man. It give you that ... that ... stickiness in your body man, an' that feelings, man, to create things that supposed to been created.

Whilst acknowledging the fallibility of such rhetorical excesses, I would support the King against Patterson, simply because the commercial interests of the entrepreneurs who controlled the new record industry militated against any kind of intervention by the central government. Moreover, the impetus toward Africanisation required no encouragement from above - it was already showing itself in the development of the Ras Tafari movement and in the disillusioned withdrawal of the unemployed youth. The locksmen were not only the militant core of the Rasta movement; they also provided a nucleus around which less coherent forms of protest could gather, and the dialogue which ensued found operatic expression in reggae.

Before 'ska' (the forerunner of reggae) Jamaica had little distinctive music of its own. Jamaican 'mento' was a rather emasculated musical form, combining local dialect 'folk songs' with a respectable version of African rhythm - a derivation from what had originally been very potent stuff indeed. Beyond this and Harry Belafonte, the North Coast did the samba to the strains of Willy Lopez and his swish Latin orchestra. But in the 1950's, in West Kingston, R. and B., imported from America, began to attract attention. Men like Duke Reid were quick to recognise the potential for profit and launched themselves as disc-jockeys forming the flamboyant aristocracy of the shantytown slums; the era of the sound system began. Survival in the highly competitive world of the backyard discos, where rival disc-jockeys vied for the title of the "boss-sound", demanded alertness, ingenuity and enterprise; and, as American R. and B. began to lose its original impetus in the late fifties, a new expedient was tried by the more ambitious d-j's, who branched out into record production themselves. Usually, an instrumental recording was all that was necessary, and the d-j would improvise the lyrics (usually simple and formulaic: "work-it-out, work-it-out" etc.) during "live" performances. Certain important precedents were set by these early recordings. Firstly, the musicians were generally selected from the vast bank of unemployed labour; used for one session, paid a pittance, and returned to the streets. The ruthless exploitation of young talent continues unabated in certain sections of the local record industry. Secondly, the music remains, even now, essentially tied to the discos and is designed principally for dancing. Thirdly, the tradition of "scatting" across a simple repetitive backing with impromptu lyrics, continues to produce some of the more interesting and exciting reggae. Lastly, and most importantly, the "ska" beat made its debut on these early unlabelled discs. Ska is a kind of jerky shuffle played on an electric guitar with the treble turned right up. The emphasis falls on the upbeat rather than on the offbeat as in R. and B., and is accentuated by the bass, drums and brass sections (trombones were an indispensable part of early ska). Ska is structurally a back-to-front version of R. and B.

Once again, as with language and religion, distortion of the original form appears to be deliberate, as well as inevitable; and inversion seems to denote appropriation, signifying that a cultural transaction has taken place. However, the alchemy which turned soul into ska was by no means simple. The imported music interacted with the established subterranean forms of Jamaica. The Cumina, Big Drum, and burra dances had long since resurrected the rhythms of Africa, and the context in which these forms were evolved directly determined their shape and content. They left an indelible mark on the semantics of ska. The burra dance was particularly significant; played on the bass,

funde and repeater drums, the burra constituted an open celebration of criminality. Since the early 30's, it had been the custom for the inhabitants of the West Kingston slums to welcome discharged prisoners back into the communities with the "burra". The music consolidated local allegiances and criminal affiliations at the expense of commitments to the larger society beyond the slums. As the locksmen began to clash regularly with the police in the late 40's, a liaison developed between locksmen and hardened criminals. The dreadlocks of the Rastamen were absorbed into the arcane iconography of the outcast and many Rastas openly embraced the outlaw status which the authorities seemed determined to thrust upon them. Still more made permanent contacts in the Jamaican underworld whilst serving prison terms for ganja offences. This drift toward a consciously anti-social and anarchist position was assisted by the police who attempted to discredit the movement by labelling all locksmen as potentially dangerous criminals who were merely using mysticism as a front for their subversive activities. As has been observed so often elsewhere, predictions such as these have a tendency to find fulfilment, and criminals like Woppy King, who was later executed for murder and rape, joined the Rastafarian fraternity and affected the extravagant style of the dreadlocks In time, the locksmen took over the burra dance completely, calling the burra drums "akete drums". Inevitably, the criminal ambience which surrounded the music survived the transference and the Niyabingi dance which replaced the burra translated the original identification with criminal values into an open commitment to terrorist violence. The crime and music of West Kingston were thus linked in a subtle and enduring symbiosis; and they remained yoked together even after the infiltration of soul. Moreover, the locksmen continued to direct the new music, and to involve themselves creatively in its production. Meanwhile, a survey in 1957 had revealed that 18% of the labour force was without work, and, as the Doxey Report was to state twelve years later, it had now become conceivable that: "many young persons will pass through the greater part of their lives having never been regularly employed " (Doxey, 1969). The embittered youth of West Kingston, abandoned by the society which claimed to serve them, were ready to look to the locksman for explanations, to listen to his music, and to emulate his posture of withdrawal. Thus, it should hardly surprise us to find that, behind the swagger and the sex, the violence and the cool of the Rude Boy music of the sixties stands the visionary Rastaman with his commodious rhetoric, his all-embracing metaphors.

And so, ska was resilient, armoured music; "rough and tough" in more ways than one. Its inception guaranteed it against serious interference from above or manipulation at the level of meaning. The stigma which was originally attached to ska by the official arbiters of good taste in Jamaica relates directly

to the criminal connotations of the "burra" dance, and the early attempts on the part of the government at manufacturing a national sound were frankly unsuccessful. Eddie Seaga, who set up one of the first record companies in Jamaica (*West Indies Records*) was one of those middle-class 'nationalist' entrepreneurs who tried to promote ska to the world as a representative (and therefore respectable) "native" form. His admission to the Labour Cabinet encouraged him in this project and alongside his attempt to organise West Kingston as a political constituency he recruited Byron Lee and the Dragonaires, a "class act" which was currently playing the North Coast, and sent them first to West Kingston to study the new music, and then to New York to present the finished product. The music suffered somewhat in the translation. Byron Lee was too polished to play ska properly, and raw ska was too "rude" to interest a world market at that time.

So, ska was left, more or less to its own devices. In the early sixties, the record industry developed under the auspices of Seaga at *West Indian Records*, Ken Khouri at Federal Studios and Chris Blackwell, a white man and son of a plantation owner, at *Island* records. But Blackwell did not confine himself to the West Indies; he soon went on to exploit the market in England, where more records were being sold to the homesick rudies than to the native Jamaicans[4]. Blackwell bought premises in the Kilburn Road and began to challenge the monopoly which the *Bluebeat* label had managed to acquire over the West Indian record market in Britain.

His triumph over Bluebeat was publicly acknowledged in 1964, when he launched the first nationally popular ska record, *My Boy Lollipop,* sung with an endearing nasal urgency by the sixteen year old Millie Small. Blackwell set up another label, *Trojan,* which dealt with most of the British releases and left Lee Gopthal to supervise the distribution from South London. Then, sometime in the summer of 1966, the music altered recognisably and ska modulated into 'rocksteady'. The horns were given less emphasis or were dropped altogether, and the sound became somewhat slower, more somnambulant and erotic. The bass began to dominate and, as rocksteady, in its turn, became heavier, it became known as reggae. Over the years, reggae attracted such a huge following that Michael Manley (the present Prime-Minister) used a reggae song *Better Must Come* in his 1972 election campaign.[5] His *People's National Party* won by an overwhelming majority.

But this does not mean that the music was defused; for simultaneously, during this period, the Rude Boys were evolving a visual style which did justice to the tesselated structure of ska. The American soul-element was reflected most clearly in the self-assured demeanour; the sharp flashy clothes, the "jive-ass" walk which the street boys affected. The politics of

ghetto pimpery found their way into the street-talk of shanty-town Jamaica, and every Rude Boy, fresh from some poor rural outback, soon began to wheel and deal with the best of them in the ubiquitous bars of Ghost Town and Back O' Wall. The rude boy lived for the luminous moment, playing dominoes[6] as though his life depended on the outcome - a big-city hustler with nothing to do, and, all the time rocksteady, ska and reggae gave him the means with which to move effortlessly - without even thinking. Cool, that distant and indefinable quality, became almost abstract, almost metaphysical, intimating a stylish kind of stoicism - survival and something more.

And, of course, there were the clashes with the police. The ganja, and the guns, and the "pressure" produced a steady stream of rude boys desperate to test their strength against the law, and the judges replied with longer and longer sentences. In the words of Michael Thomas (1973), every rudie was "dancing in the dark" with ambitions to be "the coolest Johnny-Too-Bad on Beeston Street". This was the chaotic period of ska, and Prince Buster lampooned the Bench and sang of "Judge Dread", who on side one, sentences weeping Rude Boys ("Order! Order! Rude Boys don't cry!") to 500 years and 10,000 lashes, and on side two, grants them a pardon, and throws a party to celebrate their release. The dreary mechanics of crime and punishment, of stigmatisation and incorporation, are reproduced endlessly in tragi-comic form on these early records, and the ska classics, like the music of the "burra" which preceded them, were often a simple celebration of deviant and violent behaviour. Sound system rivalries, street fights[7], sexual encounters[8], boxing matches[9], horse races[10], and experiences in prison[11], were immediately converted into folk-song and stamped with the ska beat. The disinherited Dukes and Earls, the Popes and Princes of early ska came across as music-hall gangsters and Prince Buster warned in deadly earnest, with a half-smile that "Al Capone's guns don't argue"[12].

But in the world of "007"[13] where the rude boys "loot" and "shoot" and "wail" while "out on probation", "the policemen get taller", and "the soldiers get longer" by the hour; and in the final confrontation, the authorities must always triumph. So there is always one more confrontation on the cards, and there is always a higher authority still, and that is where Judgement Day works itself back into Reggae, and the Rastas sing of an end to "sufferation" on the day when Judge Dread will be consumed in his own fire. The Rastafarian influence on reggae had been strong since the earliest days - ever since Don Drummond and Reco Rodriguez had played tunes like *Father East, Addis Ababa, Tribute to Marcus Garvey* and *Reincarnation* to a receptive audience. And even Prince Buster, the "Boss," the Main Man, the individualist par excellence, at the height of the

anarchic Rude Boy period, could exhort his followers in *Free Love*, to "act true", to "speak true", to "learn to love each other," advising the dissident rudies that "truth is our best weapon" and that "our unity will conquer." In the burlesque *Ten Commandments*, Prince Buster is typically ambivalent, proselytising, and preaching, and poking fun all at the same time; but the internalisation of God which marks the Rasta Creed is there nonetheless behind all the blustering Chauvinism:

> These are the ten commandments of man given to woman by me, Prince Buster, through the inspiration of I.

As the decade wore on, the music shifted away from America towards Ethiopia, and the rude boys moved with the music. Racial and class loyalties were intensified, and, as the music matured, it made certain crucial breaks with the R. and B. which had provided the original catalyst. It became more 'ethnic', less frenzied[14], more thoughtful, and the political metaphors and dense mythology of the locksmen began to insinuate themselves more obtrusively into the lyrics. Groups like the Wailers, the Upsetters, the Melodians and the Lionaires emerged with new material which was often revolutionary, and always intrinsically Jamaican. Some rude boys began to grow the dreadlocks, and many took to wearing woollen stocking caps, often in the green, gold and red of the Ethiopian flag to proclaim their alienation from the West. This transformation (if such a subtle change of gear deserves such apocalyptic terminology), went beyond style to modify and channel the rude boys' consciousness of class and colour. Without overstressing the point there was a trend away from the undirected violence, bravado and competitive individualism of the early sixties, towards a more articulate and informed anger; and if crime continued to offer the only solution available, then there were new distinctions to be made. A Rude Boy quoted in Nettleford (1970) exhibits a "higher consciousness" in his comments on violence:

> It's not the suffering brother you should really stick up it is these big merchants that have all these twelve places ... with the whole heap of different luxurious facilities ....,what we really want is this equal rights and justice. Everyman have a good living condition, good schooling, and then I feels things will be much better."

I would suggest that, as the Rastas themselves began to turn away from violent solutions to direct the new aesthetic, the rude boys, steeped in ska, soon acquired the locksmen's term of reference, and became the militant arm of the Rasta movement. Thus, as the music evolved and passed into the hands of the locksmen there was an accompanying expansion of class and

colour consciousness through the West Indian community. Of course, I would not isolate the emergence of a "higher consciousness" from larger developments in the ghettoes and on the campuses of the United States. Nor would I dismiss the stimulative effect of the Jamaican Black Power movement which, by the late sixties, was being led by middle-class students and was clustered around the University of the West Indies[15]. But I would stress the unique way in which these external developments were mediated to the Rude Boy (in Brixton as well as Back O' Wall), how they were digested, interpreted and reassembled by the omniscient Rasta Logos situated at the heart of reggae music. In spite of Manley and Seaga, reggae remained intact. It was never dirigible, protected, as it was, by language, by colour, and by a culture which had been forced, in its very inception, to cultivate secrecy and to elaborate defences against the intrusions of the Master Class.

Moreover, the form of reggae itself militated against outside interference and guaranteed a certain amount of autonomy. Reggae reversed the established pattern of pop music[16] by dictating a strong repetitive bassline which communicated directly to the body and allowed the singer to "scat" across the undulating surface of the rhythm. The music and the words are synchronised in good reggae and co-ordinated at a level which eludes a fixed interpretation. Linguistic patterns become musical patterns; both merge with the metabolism until sound becomes abstract, meaning non-specific. Thus, on the "heavy" fringes of reggae, beyond the lucid but literal denunciations of the Wailers, Count Ossie and the Mystic Revelation of Ras-Tafari condemn the ways of Babylon implicitly, taking reggae right back to Africa, and the rudie dee-jays (like Big Youth, Niney, I-Roy and U-Roy) threaten to undermine language itself with syncopated creole scansion and an eye for the inexpressible. Language abdicates to body-talk, belief and intuition; in form and by definition, reggae resists definition[17]. The form, then, is inherently subversive; and it was in the area of form that the Jamaican street boys made their most important innovations.

3 The Skinhead Interlude - when the stomping had to stop

> At the moment we're hero-worshipping the Spades - they can dance and sing .....
> We do the shake and the hitchhiker to fast numbers, but we're going back to dancing close - because the Spades do it.
> 19 year old mod quoted in Hamblett and Deverson, eds. (1964:22)

I turn now to the formation of an equivalent culture inside the West Indian community in Britain, and the context in which reggae was received in South London. I shall try to show

how it was used by the young blacks to transmute a situation of extreme cultural dependence into one of virtual autonomy.

There is no need to reiterate the early history of reggae in this country. I have already mentioned the important role played by Chris Blackwell and Lee Gopthal in the importation of the new music. Gradually, as *Trojan* began to flood the market, ska took over from bluebeat as the steady pulse which set the pace of the black Britons' nightlife. The era of the African "waterfront boys" which Colin MacInnes (1957) describes was definitely on the wane and the days of Billy Whispers were numbered at last as the Jamaican hustler, pimp and dealer began to come into his own. The music was transmitted through an underground network of shebeens (house parties), black clubs, and the record shops in Brixton and Peckham, and Ladbroke Grove, which catered almost exclusively to a West Indian clientele. Almost but not quite. As the early music mobilised an undefined aggressiveness and generated a cult of extreme individualism, its appeal was not confined to the members of the black community only. It soon became also the theme music of the "hard mods", who often lived in the same depressed areas of South London where the immigrants congregated, and who soon started emulating the style of the Rude Boy contingent. Thus, they wore the "stingy-brim" (pork pie) hats and the shades of the Jamaican hustler and even went out of their way to embrace the emblems of poverty which the immigrant often found unavoidable and most probably undesirable. Thus, the ill-fitting ankle-swinger trousers, which usually suggest that the wearer has been forced to accept hand-me-downs, were 'echoed' in the excessively short levis for which the "hard mod" showed a marked predilection. Even in 1964, at Margate and Brighton, mods were seen in boots and braces, sporting the close crop which artificially reproduces the texture and appearance of the short negro hair styles, favoured at the time by the West Indian blacks. In 1965, Prince Buster's *Madness* became something of a craze in some mod circles and was regularly requested at the big dance halls frequented by the South London mods. That liaison between black and white rude boy cultures which was to last until the end of the decade and was to provoke such a puzzled reaction from the commentators of youth culture had begun in earnest.

Ska obviously fulfilled the needs which mainstream pop music could no longer supply. It was a subterranean sound which had escaped commercial exploitation at a national level and was still 'owned' by the subcultures which had originally championed it. It also hit below the belt in the pleasantest way possible and spoke of the simplicities of sex and violence in a language which was immediately intelligible to the quasi-delinquent adolescent fringe of working-class culture. The developing white "progressive" music was becoming far too cerebral and

drug-orientated to have any relevance for the "hard mods" whose lives remained totally insulated from the articulate and educated milieu in which the new hippy culture was germinating. And of course, the B.B.C. was hardly the ideal medium - ska became scratchy and lost all its punch when played on a transistor - there was simply not enough bass. Moreover, the lyrics of records like Prince Buster's *Ten Commandments* and Max Romeo's *Wet Dream* were rarely acceptable, and most new releases were immediately classified as unsuitable. Thus, the music remained secret and was disseminated in the Masonic atmosphere of close communal and subcultural interactions. The *Ram Jam* in Brixton was one of the first clubs in London where white and black youths mixed in numbers; but already the disreputable and violent associations began to accumulate round the new music. There were tales of knives, and ganja at the *Ram Jam*, and there were more than enough risks for any white rudie prepared to take his life into his hands to step into Brixton, and prove his pilled-up manhood.

By 1967, the skinhead had emerged from this larval stage and was immediately consigned by the press to the "violent menace" category which the mainstream pop culture of the time appeared increasingly reluctant to occupy. As the startling flora and fauna of San Francisco were making their spectacular debut along the King's Road in the summer, Dandy Livingstone, the first British reggae star to gain national recognition, sang *Rudy a Message to You* to audiences in the less opulent boroughs of South London, and rallied his followers around a different standard altogether. The links which bound the hard mod to the rude boy subculture were drawn even tighter in the case of the skinhead. The long open coats worn by some West Indians were translated by the skinheads into the "crombie" which became a popular article of dress amongst the more reggae-oriented groups (i.e. amongst those who defined themselves more as midnight ramblers than as afternoon Arsenal supporters). Even the erect carriage and the loose limbed walk which characterize the West Indian street-boy were (rather imperfectly) simulated by the aspiring 'white negroes'. In clubs like the *A-Train, Sloopy's* and *Mr. B's*, the skinheads mingled with young West Indians, called each other "rass" and "pussy clot"[18], cracked their fingers like thoroughbred Jamaicans with as much panache and as little wincing as possible, talked "'orses" and "pum-pum"[19] and moved with as much studied cool as they could muster.

This spontaneous movement towards cultural integration (with the West Indians only; *not*, needless to say, with the Pakistani and Indian immigrants) was unprecendented but it was not to have any permanent salutary effect on race relations within South London's working-class communities. For, despite the fact that the skinhead might dance the "shuffle" or the "reggay" with a certain amount of style, despite the fact that he might speak a

few random phrases of patois with the necessary disregard for English syntax, it was all a little artificial - just a bit too contrived to be convincing. Despite everything, he could never quite make that cultural transition. And when he found himself unable to follow the thick dialect and densely packed Biblical allusions which mark the later reggae he must have felt even more hopelessly alienated. Excluded even from the ranks of the excluded, he was left out in the cold, condemned to spend his life in Babylon because the concept of Zion just didn't make sense. And even if he could make that sympathetic passage from Notting Hill to Addis Ababa, from a whiteness which wasn't worth much anyway, to a blackness which just might mean something more, he only found himself trapped further in an irresolvable contradiction. For the rude boys had come of age and the skins were sentenced to perpetual adolescence, and although Desmond Dekker topped the British charts in 1969 with *Israelite* (a cry to Ethiopia) the brief miscegenation of the sixties was at an end[20].

The "Africanisation" (or "Rastification") of reggae which I have already emphasised in the sections on Jamaica, militated against any permanently close contact between black and white youth cultures. Once again, the precise "moment" at which the search for racial identity produced a significant rupture with earlier patterns of behaviour can be expressed mythically. In an article by Gillman (1973) on the Harambee project in the Holloway Road, a young West Indian disc jockey based in South London, describes the impact of the record *Young, Gifted and Black* on an audience which comprised both black and white rudies:

> There was that song *Young Gifted and Black* by Mike and Marcia, and when we played it all the skinheads used to sing 'young gifted and white' and they used to cut the wires to the speakers and we had some fights and less white people used to come up after that[21].

This parting of the ways had been preparing for years outside the dance-halls, in the daytime world of school and work. Firstly, as Dilip Hiro points out, the close proximity into which black and white children were thrown at school tended to break down the cruder racial myths. The illusion of white superiority, fostered in the black parents by an Anglicised education in the West Indies, could hardly be supported by their children who were growing up next to their supposed superiors without noticing any appreciable difference either in performance or potential. On leaving school, nonetheless, the black youth was often confronted with open discrimination on the part of prospective employers. As the demand for unskilled labour diminished, the black and white school leavers were thrown into fierce competition for what work was available, and the white youth, more often than not, was given preference. If the black school leaver was more ambitious and sought skilled work, he was likely to be even more

bitterly disappointed. A correspondent of the *Observer* (July 14, 1968) showed that white youths in "deprived" areas of black settlement like Paddington and Notting Hill were almost five times more likely to get skilled jobs than coloured youngsters. Michael Banton (1967) estimated that by 1974, one in six of the school leavers in the inner London area would be coloured and the rivalry has obviously escalated accordingly. The predicament facing the black youth on leaving school, then, made him review his position with a more critical eye than his parents. To the first generation of immigrants from the West Indies, England had promised a golden future, and if that promise had not been fulfilled, there seemed little point in looking elsewhere. In fact, to do so would be to admit defeat and failure and so the older immigrant went on working on the buses or queueing up for the dole and kept his bitterness stashed away under his insouciant smile. But the young black Briton was less inclined to shrug and forbear, and the reassessment of the African heritage currently underway in Jamaica and the U.S.A. was bound to provide channels through which his anger could be directed and his dignity retrieved. Thus the cry of the Rastas for African redemption was welcomed by the disappointed diaspora of South London. Exiled first from Africa, and then from the West Indies to the cold and inhospitable British Isles, the longing for the Healing of the Breach was felt with an even greater poignancy by the dispossessed Rude Boys of Shepherds Bush and Brixton.

Hiro contrasts the new black consciousness of the coloured youth in Britain against the more sober attitude of the West Indian parents in the example of Noel Green, born in London in 1958, whose father Anthony complains:

> As a young child he wanted to be called an Englishman. But now [In 1969] he considers himself a West Indian and a black person (1973).

These developments were translated into specifically Jamaican terms and the men of the dreadlocks began to make an incongruous and sinister appearance once more on the grey streets of the metropolis. By 1973, McGlashan could report the bizzare conjunction of Africa and Ealing at the West London Grand Rastafarian Ball, where Rastas, twice removed from the mythical homeland, yearned in unison for an end to "sufferation" as giggling white girls danced to the reggae. The cult of Ras Tafari appealed at least as strongly to the black youth of Great Britain as it did to their cousins in Jamaica. If anything it proved even more irresistible, giving the stranded Community at once a name and a future, promising the Lost Tribes of Israel just retribution for the centuries of slavery, cultivating the art of withdrawal so that rejection could be met by rejection. All this was reflected in and communicated through the music which had found in Britain an even larger and more avid audience than in its

country of origin. Of course, the skinheads turned away in disbelief as they heard the Rastas sing of the "have-nots" seeking "harmony" and the scatting d-j's exhorting their black brothers to "be good in (their) neighbourhood". More odious still to the skinheads was the Rasta greeting of "Peace and Love" which many young rudies adopted (along with the Rasta handclasp). The wheel had come full circle and the skinhead, who had sought refuge from the posturing beatitudes of the pot-smoking hippie in the introverted coterie of the black delinquent young, was confronted with what appeared to be the very attitudes which had originally dictated his withdrawal. It must have seemed, as the rudies closed their ranks, that they had also changed their sides, and the doors were doubly locked against the bewildered skinhead.

We need only turn back to the mythology of Rastafarianism which I have already attempted to decipher, to see that such an outcome was, in fact, inevitable sooner or later. The transposed religion, the language, the rhythm, and the style of the West Indian immigrant guaranteed his culture against any deep penetration by equivalent white groups. Simultaneously, the apotheosis of alienation into exile enabled him to maintain his position on the fringes of society without feeling any sense of cultural loss, and distanced him sufficiently so that he could undertake a highly critical analysis of the society to which he owed a nominal allegiance. For the rest, the Biblical terms, the fire, the locks, and Haile Selassie et al served to resurrect politics, providing the mythical wrappings in which the bones of the economic structure could be clothed so that exploitation could be revealed and countered in the ways traditionally recommended by the Rastafarian. The metasystem thus created was constructed around precise and yet ambiguous terms of reference and whilst remaining rooted in the material world of suffering, of Babylon and oppression, it could escape, literally at a "moment's" notice, into an ideal dimension which transcended the time-scale of the dominant ideology. There were practical advantages to be gained by adopting this indirect form of communication, for if a more straightforward language of rebellion had been chosen, it would have been more easily dealt with and assimilated by the dominant class against which it was directed. Paradoxically, "dread" only communicates so long as it remains incomprehensible to its intended victims, suggesting the unspeakable rites of an insatiable vengeance. And the exotica of Rastafarianism provided distractive screens behind which the rude boy culture could pursue its own devious devices unhindered and unseen.

FOOTNOTES

1. Exuma, for example, sing of the Obeahman, duppies (ghosts) and zombies.
2. Nettleford (1970) claims this drift towards quietism was accelerated by the excesses of the Red Hills and Coral Gardens affrays which turned many locksmen away from violent solutions.
3. This was perhaps the great disappointment of the Sixties (cf. the demise of the hippies, and the Paris students of 1968, also the failure of Laing's "meta-journey" to really get him anywhere - see Juliet Mitchell, 1974: 225-292). Nettleford (1970) criticises the emergent Black consciousness in Jamaica for failing to adopt a more rigorous and analytic approach to African Studies.
4. In Brixton, for instance, 80% of the black population came from Jamaica, and record shops in the area soon began to specialise in bluebeat and ska.
5. Manley also won support in the rural areas where a Holy Roller type of religion still lingers on, by appearing in public carrying a stick which he called "The Rod of Correction", with which he promised to beat out all 'duppies' (ghosts), and to drive injustice away.
6. A popular game amongst the Jamaican working class.
7. See *Earthquake* in which Prince Buster challenges a rival to do battle on Orange Street.
8. See every other record of this period.
9. See Niney's *Fiery Foreman meets Smokey Joe Frazier.*
10. See The Pioneers' *Long Shot Kick the Bucket*, about a horse which dies with everybody's money on it.
11. See *54-46* by the Maytals again (this is the number Toots was given when imprisoned on a ganja charge).
12. Lyrics from *Al Capone* by Prince Buster.
13. From *Shanty Town* by Desmond Dekker.
14. Cunchyman said that the Americans "don't know how to move slow" - see Thomas (1973).
15. *Abeng*, the official organ of the Black Power movement in Jamaica, translated Rastafarian "metaphorics" straight into Marxian dialectics. Economic analysis jostled uneasily against the intensely personal testimonies of individual 'sufferers' in the columns of the paper. Among other events the banning of the Black Power historian, Walter Rodney, by the University helped to crystallise the movement in a political direction. See Rodney (1969).
16. Though 'heavy rock' also has an emphatic and hypnotic bass line, there is nothing equivalent to the 'scat' in rock. Some modern jazz plays with language at this level, but this jazz is produced principally by black musicians (Albert Ayler, Roland Kirk, Pharoah Saunders, John Coltrane, etc.)
17. In a similar way, the syntax of "heavy" soul obviates the need for lexical meaning. James Brown looks at the relationship between "the pronunciation and the realisation" in *Stoned to the Bone* and gives a catalogue of the various words used to denote "mind-power": ("vibes E.S.P.," "positive thinking" etc.) but discards them all by discarding language itself: "But I call it What it is what it is".

This tautologous equation is repeated again and again until it synchronises with the strong, repetitive backing and is eventually absorbed.

18. Jamaican swear words that don't really bear translating!
19. i.e. gambling and women.
20. The skinhead style, of course, survived into the 70's particularly in the Midlands and the Northern industrial towns but it did not maintain its early strong links with black culture. Skinheads in Birmingham (where race relations have always left a lot to be desired) were often openly hostile to West Indians, and football tended to take over from reggae as the central preoccupation of the skinhead group.
21. Later, in the same article, two boys who live at the hostel are reported discussing the finer points of "mugging". Their comments show that they are prepared to make racial distinctions and they refer frequently to "suffering", a key concept in Rastafarianism which seems to be used as an index to the believer's eligibility for salvation by trial: First boy: We don't touch our own people. I never thought of doing it to a black man. Second Boy: A black man know that we all suffering the same.

Appendix: Unemployment, the Context of Street-Boy Culture

Rachel Powell

In 1943, the unemployment rate in Jamaica had stood at 25.6%; by 1945 it was exacerbated by the return of Jamaican ex-Servicemen and those employed in the U.K. for the war period (Richmond, 1954: 140). Simey (1946: 136) analysed reports of previous commissions, and noted the contradiction between the necessity for greater national productivity in order to finance improved social services (required with quite exceptional urgency in West Kingston), and the probability that greater individual productivity, motivated by desire for higher standards of living, would yet further aggravate the shortage of jobs. During the 1950's and 60's, Jamaica attained the world's highest *per capita* productivity increase (Lowenthal, 1972: 297), and industrial development, mainly in mining and tourism, was considerably expanded. Bauxite mining, developed largely by Canadian interests, provided relatively very well-paid jobs for some - at a median of £415 p.a., nearly four times the median wage for men - but those "some" comprised less than 2% of the total labour force, and included an unknown proportion of expatriate employees (Francis, 1963). Similarly, figures for 1958 (from the Institute for Social and Economic Research, Kingston) showed the distribution of benefit from tourist-trade expansion - £1 million, about 6% of total expenditure, paid in taxes; approximately 27% in tourism-related wage earnings; and 39% forthwith remitted to organisations and individuals outside Jamaica. Internally, such development meant that Jamaica also

registered the world's current record for inequality of income distribution, the best-off 5% of the population commanding 30% of national income, the poorest 20% sharing a mere 2% (Ahiram, 1966). External concern at this potentially explosive situation may be reflected in a *Jamaica Weekly Gleaner* report (10.11.1971) that agreement had been concluded, between the Canadian and Jamaican Governments, for insurance cover "against certain risks not normally insurable with commercial insurers .. including expropriation [I.e. nationalisation] inability to repatriate earnings or capital, loss due to insurrection, revolution or war".

Individually, also, post-war development meant change. In 1955, in the rural areas, M. G. Smith found that - of a sample of men aged under twenty-five - only 16% had worked full-time for the week preceding survey; 44% had worked half-time or less; 15% had got no work at all (Smith, M. G., 1965: 197). The average rural family in the sample, there including all age-groups, had about five members and could dispose of approximately £2 per week total expenditure (Smith, M. G., 1956). Comparisons of "necessary" and "choice" expenditure suggest that contemporaneously, *in both Jamaica and the U.K.*, an effective degree of real choice in expenditure was attained only at incomes around £14 per family per week (Powell, 1972). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the 1960 Jamaican Census recorded a very heavy drain of population from rural areas to the Metropolitan district, where almost 40% of those then resident had been born elsewhere in Jamaica (Francis, 1963).

The same source revealed that 46% of men resident in the Metropolitan area earned less than £4 per week, and nearly 8% less than £1. Employment tabulations gave a city unemployment rate of 11.9%, and a rather remarkable 6% for Jamaica overall. Critics observed that the week selected for Census, April 1st-7th coincided with crop season, and said rather little about the situation of those only employed for half the year. 13% of city workers were recorded as underemployed, and the rural parishes, even in crop time, showed a median of 30%. Ruscoe (1963: 67) quoted a *Daily Gleaner* (2.7.62) estimate of a steady 100,000 unemployed, 15% of available labour force, plus an unknown percentage of the half-employed, and concluded that the Government regarded employment figures as classified information. By April 1972, however, the incoming *People's National Party* Government was frank enough, in a B.B.C. interview, to include among its inherited problems unemployment rates, in Kingston, running at 15%-20% for adults, and as much as 30% for young people then seeking their first jobs.

A STRATEGY FOR LIVING
Iain Chambers

Note: *Iain Chambers is working on a critique of the more formalist and a-historical aspects of the semiotic approach to the analysis of culture and ideology. His assessment of the work of Roland Barthes was published in WPCS 6. So far, his work has been mainly applied to the area of film and visual texts. Here, he poses the question of how political and historical analysis might be combined with formal analysis in the study of black music. The historical experience and structural position of black Americans, their subordination to the cultural hegemony of white America, is used to explain both the characteristic forms of black music, and what happens when that music is adopted and adapted to express the quite different experience of white American (and British) youth.*

> Liberation for blacks will come out of the revolutionary culture, consciousness, and experience of Afro-America.
>
> Earl Ofari.

> At lilac evening I walked with every muscle aching amongst the lights of 27th and Welton in the Denver coloured section, wishing I were a Negro, feeling that the best the white world had offered was not enough ecstasy for me, not enough life, joy, kicks, darkness, music, not enough night.
>
> Jack Kerouac (1958)

The roots of rock 'n' roll lie deep within the historical experience of the black men and women of the United States, and essential to that history is the passage of black peoples into the New World. This passage was produced by the West European expansion beginning in the late fifteenth century and was carried westward across the Atlantic by colonialism and the slave trade. Thus, the forced emigration of black men and women from their West African homeland cannot be divorced from the development of capitalism and its concomitant ideology of racism: the justification of the exploitation and dehumanisation of sections of society in the interests of profit. Black music is inextricably bound into the Afro-American consciousness of this history in an alien world where social divisions of class were complicated by the added dimension of the cultural division of race.

In this situation black men and women have worked up their experiences of the past and the present into a music which, whilst reflecting the interpenetration of black and white, of Africa and Europe, crucially revolves around the black experience, black consciousness of economic and social deprivation, and the continuing enslavement in a racist ideology. To describe the resultant music as 'autonomous' is to stress the political substratum of black music: its relative independence from white hegemony, despite the attempts of white culture - from Stephen Foster's minstrels and 'black-face', through rag-time and the big swing bands, to 'white' blues singers - to appropriate and neutralise it. In the history of black expression in the U.S.A. it is music, above all, which has retained its roots in the black experience. One has only to think of the more successful incorporation of blacks in other forms of expression such as literature, entertainment and sport where their blackness is either conveniently ignored or else reified, making them 'invisible men'. Attempts to use these channels for black ends are heavily censured, as the career of Muhammad Ali, or the howl of rage over the Black Power salute at the Mexico Olympics in 1972, clearly exemplify.

The tradition of all dead generations weighs

like a nightmare on the brain of the living.

K. Marx (1951)

Produced by the descendants of former slaves, black music, in the hybrid form of rock 'n' roll, was reproduced by another section of the American working class: the white, rural, southern poor. The empirical evidence of this appropriation in the history of the early days of rock 'n' roll is quite clear, but the profound implications of this connection need to be spelt out, since most commentators reduce it to the level of stylistic appropriation, and in the process depoliticise and undercut its profundity.

Ever since the bargain of 1877 between the northern bourgeoisie and the southern aristocracy which ended Reconstruction, class issues in America have consistently been turned into race issues. This had the effect of keeping the working class divided against itself and labour weak in its relation to capital. The first major attempts to organise American labour - the Knights of Labour - refused to have any truck with black workers. The early years of the twentieth century were marked by sharp interracial tension, with whites seeing blacks as a potential threat to their job security; and these divisions were aggravated by the severe economic recessions that the U.S.A. experienced in the three decades leading up to the First World War.

By the 1920's the first tentative attempts by black intellectuals to establish some basic rights for black people (National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People) were super-

seded by Marcus Garvey's movement that stressed the African origins of American blacks. In the wave of revolutionary upsurge running throughout the First World War years and continuing into the 1920's, the Garvey Movement created a mass base amongst American blacks.

Well they call it stormy Monday

But Tuesday's just as bad ....

A traditional blues.

The immediate post war black migration up the Mississippi valley to such northern industrial cities as Detroit, Gary and Pittsburgh created a clash between expectations and harsh realities that was to explode in the 1930's. In that explosive decade, although many blacks were unemployed and on relief, they also played an important part in the extremely militant rank and file movement which peaked in 1937 with half a million involved in sit down strikes. One of the products of this militancy was the formation of the C.I.O. But it was really the ending of the decade and the shift into a war economy which provided blacks (at least, black men) with the opportunity to advance and win more economic power. This set the terrain not only for an incipient black bourgeoisie, but for the call for advancement of black social and political rights as well.

Although some blacks were able to exploit the contradictions of imperialism, American capital had learnt the lesson of 1929. Just as in the '30's it proceeded through neo-Keynsian measures and the New Deal to institutionalise the class struggle in the white industrial sector so, in the post World War II period, with black riots in army camps and northern cities, it sought to contain the black upsurge politically. The principal forum for this containment was the Democratic Party. In 1948, Truman ran on a civil rights ticket in the presidential elections and won. In 1954 came the famous Supreme Court ruling against Segregation in schools, coupled with tough white Southern resistance: blacks still await the full implementation of this legislation over twenty years later. But even this limited progress was frozen in the red-baiting Cold War days of the '50's. Since the thaw, most developments - until the ghetto rebellions of the 1960's - have continued to reflect the successful integration of racism, into all parts of society, by capital.

The successful expansion of American capital after the 1930's has maintained divisions within the working class - divisions which divide the class by race as well as by sex, nationality and skill. It is an expansion that has moved out from the factory to the whole of society (the 'Social Factory') and has ensured capital's continuation and relative stability. These divisions are played out in the day to day antagonisms that split the working class: in the struggle between blacks and whites for jobs, housing, education and social and political power. These

divisions continued to plague the American scene in the 60's and with specific 'effects' on the political level. The rise of the black nationalist, black power and separatist black political movements from the mid 1960's was a response to this double exploitation by class and race.

The black national liberation struggles in Africa were a major inspiration to the increasing black militancy of the decade as expressed in lunch counter sit-ins, civil rights marches, the riots in Watts etc., the Black Muslims and the formation of the Black Panthers. But the brutal and successful suppression of the latter by the Nixon administration demonstrates the weakness of a politically immature sectional politics which fails to forge a mass base. The working class struggles continue to be sectional: blacks, women, students, anti-war. This has led to a 'radical' sectoral politics but not to a socialist politics: a whole series of 'anti' movements - 'anti-racism', 'anti-sexism', 'anti-imperialist' - which were often also anti-working class!

> It was if a driverless vehicle were speeding through the American night down an unlighted street toward a stone wall and was boarded on the fly by a stealthy ghost with a drooling leer on his face, who, at the last detour before chaos, careened the vehicle down a smooth highway that leads to the future and life; and to ask these Americans to understand that they were the passengers on this driverless vehicle and that the lascivious ghost was the Saturday night crotchfunk of the Twist, or the 'Yeah, Yeah, Yeah' which the Beatles hijacked from Ray Charles, to ask these Calvinistic profligates to see the logical and reciprocal links is more cruel than asking a hope to die Okie Music buff to cop the sounds of John Coltrane.
>
> Eldridge Cleaver (1970)

Let us now return to the music and examine why black music, in particular the blues and rhythm-and-blues, were taken up, and in the process transformed by another section of the working class that was visibly antagonistic to it. The sketch above has pointed to the common class interests of these two sections, but also to their division through capital's exploitation of racism. The result is that the white working class stands over and above the black working class economically and culturally. This allows whites the power to *re-define* the music produced by those who are objectively of the same class but who are culturally subordinate to white hegemony.

The other side is that these 'outsiders', the black working class, were thus in a better position than the white members of their class to produce a positive and coherent expression of their oppression. From plantation to ghetto, black culture, and especially black music, has provided one of the strongest means of survival - a secret language of solidarity, a way of articulating oppression, a means of cultural resistance, a cry of hope. Not surprisingly, the black politics of the 1960's was heralded by a massive upsurge of black culture and black consciousness. The fact that the reaction to oppression often took a cultural rather than an overt political form was also due to the cultural power of white society to determine what aspects of black experience were 'acceptable' and what were not. While black 'entertainment' and black 'art' became acceptable, black politics most certainly never did. And black culture itself came under fire as soon as blacks made its political meanings manifest.

In the 1950's the music was taken up largely by young, southern working class whites, seeking to mark their difference from the generations of the Depression in a period when even the most backward sector of the American economy - southern agriculture - was being regenerated by the boom stimulated by Eisenhower Republicanism and the economics of the Cold War. This establishment of difference, of a new identity, by white American youth in the early '50's was strengthened by the outcry of white southerners against, for example, the young Elvis Presley for singing "nigger music". And this was prior to the big live performances which followed, when the whole assemblage of hair, clothes, dancing, music and mannerisms - the *style* of Presley - made him the rallying point of parental wrath, north *and* south of the Mason-Dixon line.

> She bought me a silk suit
> She put some luggage in my hand
> And I was high over Albuquerque
> Heading for the promised land.
>
> Chuck Berry, *The Promised Land*

This contradictory relationship between white youth subculture and black music was given the Madison Avenue seal of approval. The morganatic marriage was legitimised, the commodity label minted; from this unholy alliance the 'American teenager' stepped forth. Some of these 'poor country boys' - Presley, Johnny Cash, Roy Orbison, Jerry Lee Lewis - did make it to the 'big time', alienating, in the process, the last vestiges of their rural or class origins. Through that process everything was sucked in which could be drawn to feed and expand the dream of teenage success. The itinerant bluesman met the cowboy on the streets of the city and black expression was incorporated into the existential shell of white, urban romanticism. The black stud becomes a midnight cowboy; Mississippi John Hurt's "Candyman" becomes the Rolling Stones' "Midnight Rambler".

Outside this process of incorporation and emasculation stood black music itself: an affective expression produced and located concretely in the Afro-American experience. The dimensions of that experience remained intact and unchanged: slavery; economic, social and political deprivation; racism; life in the ghetto. The music continues to have a largely underground 'invisible' existence. Throughout the 1950's and 1960's, black music gives white rock and pop successive transfusions of life and energy - it is the unwritten and unsung source of a thousand variations and imitations. But it is the white imitators who reap the glamour and the publicity - and the money. Black musicians are confined to the ghetto party, the small night-club, the studio sessions, the endless travelling to one night stands at the bottom of the bill. Yet, despite this merciless exploitation, black music continues to thrive, develop and change, in tune with its own autonomous roots and forms.

Like all folk music, black music is an *affective* music as opposed to the increasing rationality and 'mathematical' logic (and illogic) of contemporary Western classical music. As with most European folk music, West African music, from which most black music derives, is based upon the pentachord, the five note scale. (In fact, European pipe music - e.g. Scottish, Sicilian, etc. - is closer to the blues than it is to European 'classical' music.) When taken up by white audiences and reproduced by white musicians, black music undergoes a transformation in the process of being recast into a fresh *context*. Important in this respect is the simplicity and yet the amazing potential for development and improvisation contained in the basic twelve bar blues pattern. It was a music whose rudiments were easy to master and yet capable of providing the basis for the musical explorations of either a Jimi Hendrix or a John Coltrane. (When, in 1955, Charlie Parker, one of the most complex and advanced of jazz musicians, lay dying, he wondered aloud to Art Blakey "when the young people would come back to playing the blues". See Hall and Whannel, 1964: 89). In Britain it was the twelve bar pattern in the form of 'skiffle' that formed the link between the difficulties of playing revivalist jazz and the democratisation of music-making heralded by the hundreds of skiffle groups that emerged in the late 50's and early 60's. But skiffle was itself a borrowing from black music - the 'spasm bands' of New Orleans in the 1890's and the 'jump' bands of Harlem in the 1940's.

Black music was a product of the cultural determinacies operating upon the black working class but it was also a form arising directly from the material conditions of that particular existence: the call and response patterns and the field hollers developed while working the land are still to be found deeply inscribed in black music today, whether in R. and B., Soul or

Jazz. It is generally accepted that the slurred notes so characteristic of the blues resulted from fitting music composed on a five note scale on to instruments designed for the equal tempered eight note scale. But what is important about all these stylistic features is not only how they represent a response to a specific cultural context but also how that context serves to underpin the music as a *shared experience between performer and audience*. A situation held together by a culture which resists and survives, by a particular situation, as well as by class forces cemented by racism. This complex led to a heightened self-consciousness that could not fail to be articulated in the music.

Black music survived by its capacity to reflect and adapt to the differing experiences and conditions of black people - as slave, field-hand, cotton-picker, bar-room entertainer, prostitute, maid and waitress. A further line of development was opened - one which greatly facilitated its appropriation by white youth subculture - with the black migration to the northern cities. In the heartlands of the working class, black music was further refined to catch the experiences of inner city life. The guitar was electrified and rhythm sections added to set the noises of the ghetto into the blues. The blues became R and B. By the 1960's in the U.S.A. "the city is the black man's land". (James Boggs), and the music produced there reverberates throughout the Harlems of the world. The blues, as Jimmy Rushing prophesied, had become "everybody's business".

Get out in that kitchen and

rattle those pots and pans

from *Shake, Rattle 'n' Roll*

I would like to make this argument, about the way black music is transformed in the course of white appropriation, by examining two versions of *Shake, Rattle 'n' Roll*, which appeared during the very beginnings of rock 'n' roll in the early 50's. The hit parade version by Bill Haley and the Comets (the exception that proves the rule: Haley was one of the few early rock 'n' rollers *not* to be southern and young) was a cover version of Big Joe Turner's R. and B. hit. Haley's removal of the explicit sexual references in the lyrics has been noticed by several writers, but what is of equal significance is the different dynamics between the vocals and the instruments in the two versions.

In the Haley version the voice is up front with the music as a backcloth. This stems from several strands in the history of white music making in the States. Before becoming a rock 'n' roll act, Bill Haley and the Comets had been a Country and Western band for several years. Although it's a complex relationship, C. and W. is basically an amalgam between the blues and European folk music. In C. and W. music there was a heavy emphasis placed upon it as a dance music, as there also was with

much of the blues and R. and B., with someone shouting out the dance steps. In Haley's *Shake, Rattle 'n' Roll* this heritage is not lost: the lyrics are not so much sung as shouted. This emphasis on the vocal also meshes with the Tin Pan Alley practice, where it was the singer - Crosby, Sinatra, Como - not the song that was important - and the main vehicle of commercial exploitation.

Here, we must take account of the further series of mediations involved in the manufacture of music with the gigantic expansion of the record industry after the Second World War. With this expansion the emphasis shifted from the *recorded performance* to the *performance recording*, which in turn was associated with the move from the vocalist to the recording star. Rock 'n' roll marks another first for capitalism! It was the first music to gain popularity primarily through records. It went through a productive process of arrangers, songwriters, producers and session musicians and was then 'serviced' by D.J.'s, radio stations and live performances. It was basically only in the black popular music of the 1950's that the *recorded performance* still remained important. (It would be unfair to suggest that some of the early Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis records were not in a similar category; but these were soon swallowed up by mass assembly line musical and - in Presley's case - film production.)

In the original *Shake, Rattle 'n' Roll* version by Joe Turner we find a close integration between the vocals and the instruments with the voice participating as an equal not a privileged instrument. Where Haley's shouted lyric is the product of white music making, so in the Turner version, with its close integration of vocals and instruments, we find the product of another cultural tradition: a tradition in which the blues guitarist or pianist usually composed the music, wrote the lyrics and then performed it. Similarly in jazz, the 'standard' songs which were used formed only the chordal base-sequence for the real music making: the improvisation. (The 'be-bop' period associated with Charlie Parker and, after him, 'progressive jazz', took this practice of improvisation across a 'standard' chord progression to extreme limits.) The resulting music was an expression held together and concretised in the shared cultural and social context of audience and performer, for reasons that I hope the preceding sections have made quite manifest. In other words this music is worked up in a living social and cultural context that may later be 'captured' on record. This relation between 'lead' and participants, pioneered in the early field holler, was retained and reproduced in the live jam-session so characteristic of more advanced 'performed' jazz.

Even when there was a conscious attempt by white musicians, under the direct influence of black music, to capture this

integration of voice and instrument - the Stones; electric Dylan; the Beatles, the latter on their first L.P. attempting to achieve a 'live' feel in the studio - the importance of the vocal was rarely subverted, except sometimes by the Stones in their heavy handed way: *Tumbling Dice* is probably the best example. Just to stress the point of how musical stylistics can be located in social and cultural determinacies, the different emphasis between the vocals and the instruments is again clearly demonstrated if one compares Chuck Berry's 1957 recording of his own song *Route 66* with the Stones' version recorded in 1963. Again, we find in the latter, Jagger singing 'up front' with the rest of the Stones laying down a 'backing', whereas in the Berry version the voice and the guitar are interchangeable.

> **I really did like the way you started off this meeting with song. It reminded me that when I was a youngster working in the logging camps of Western Washington, I'd come to Seattle occasionally and go down Skid Road to the Wobbly Hall, and our meetings there were started with a song. Song was the great thing that cemented the I.W.W. together.**
>
> **Harvey O'Connor, C.I.O. militant**

I have tried to locate black music as a music produced by a particular section of the working class, whose expressions have been viewed as largely peripheral in the dominant social definitions. I have suggested that this gives the music a *tension;* it opens up cracks which reveal the dialectic between its history and its signification, and this in turn enables us to posit social and cultural meaning both in its production and then in various appropriations. It points to the profundity of the position of music in the culture of the black American working class. As one writer has put it, for the black person the ideology of Soul "is a powerful weapon in his strategy for living." On the other side it suggests why white appropriation of black music always appears to be more superficial. Once cut loose from its original context, the music is *recast* as a stylistic facet. Thus, in Britain in the 1960's, we find Skinheads rewriting 'black pride' lyrics as 'white pride' This apparent superficiality is no doubt strengthened by the tensions which arise when white youth groups try to ride out the contradictions of appropriating a music that struggles in its very forms against white hegemony.

In this piece I have not attempted to set up some crude analogy between black and youth on one side, white and parent on the other. Obviously the mediated appropriation of black

music by youth in Britain, and working class youth in particular, met and expressed very different concrete needs. Nevertheless, embedded in black culture, in black music, are oppositional values which in a fresh context served to symbolise and symptomatise the contradictions and tensions played out in British working class youth sub-culture.

STRUCTURES, CULTURES, AND BIOGRAPHIES

Chas Critcher

Note: *This is an extract from a pamphlet on 'Mugging' written by members of the Centre, and published by the Paul, Jimmy and Mustafa Support Committee. The pamphlet, 20 Years, dealt with the Handsworth case where three youths were given long, deterrent sentences for 'mugging' an Irish labourer. Though 'mugging' was not exclusively a black crime, it was closely associated, in the media and in the public mind, with black youth. During 1972-3, there was a major 'moral panic' about the growth of 'mugging': the pamphlet argues that this phenomenon cannot be understood outside of an appreciation of the situation of black youth and the 'logic' which might make 'mugging' a rational option for black kids trapped by a racist society. In filling out this notion of how social situations lead certain individuals to what the control culture defines as a 'criminal' solution, the extract makes use of three related concepts: structures, cultures and biographies. Though the particular application here is to black youth and crime, the scheme has a far wider reference for the position of youth groups in general. 20 Years is available from the Action Centre, 134, Villa Road, Handsworth, or from the Centre. Fuller accounts of the Centre's work on 'mugging' are available in Tony Jefferson's MA, "For a Social Theory of Deviance: The Case of Mugging, 1972-3", in Jefferson and Clarke, 1974, CCCS Stencilled Paper No. 17, and in the forthcoming Centre study of the 1972-3 Mugging Panic.*

The sentences passed on Paul Storey, James Duignan and Mustafa Fuat were the climaxes of a process of 'moral panic', which found its need for vengeance fulfilled in the victimisation of three juveniles. The sentences bore no relation to the nature of the crime committed as we understand it, nor did they reflect the relatively limited and wholly non-violent previous records of the three boys. Even without the 'mugging' panic, it is doubtful whether existing ways of thinking about explaining or treating crime would have produced a very different outcome. There would have been a difference of degree but not of kind in the sentencing. The extreme rigidity of the judicial and penal systems means that the more difficult a crime is to understand, the easier it is to revert to ideas of basic savagery as the easiest explanation, and this justifies savage sentences. It is not only the inflexibility in understanding an individual or a set of crimes which leads to such

sentences, but a failure to understand the nature of all criminal activity, the failure to relate criminal acts in the life of the criminal as a member of society.

Thus, we wish to offer a framework for understanding crime, which if used for this particular case demonstrates that the traditional ways of interpreting and punishing crime cannot begin to understand or 'treat' a crime as complex as this one. We wish to distinguish three elements in the life-situation of any individual which bear upon the likelihood of him or her becoming involved in criminal activity. These are the factors of structures, cultures and biography. *Structures* we define as those 'objective' aspects of anyone's life-situation which appear beyond the individual's control, having their sources in the distribution of power and wealth in the society. Taken together, such structural factors place the individual or family in relation to other individuals or families. Work, income, housing and education act perennially as the basic structures in this society, but in certain places at certain times other structural factors may assume a crucial importance, as does the factor of race in many of the inner rings of our large cities, where it becomes the final link in a chain of discrimination. Firstly, then, a person or close social grouping is situated in relation to the basic structures of society: they circumscribe present experience, and are the limits of any foreseeable future. We are not saying that being at the wrong end of these structures - in poor housing, with little educational opportunity, the most soul-destroying jobs, and a low income - gives rise on every occasion to crime, or that if these structural contraints were removed, then crime would largely cease. People do not respond to their environment in such a crude way. They create, and have created for them, ways of thinking and acting which embody ideas, beliefs, values, notions of right and wrong. These we call *cultures*.

> I just take it for now because I can't do nothing about it. I just got to take it until some chance come along. Then I can f--- somebody up. Get back what's owing to me. But that chance hasn't come up yet. It might take a long time. I'll see it when it comes though. The older generation of black people in this country still turn the other cheek and we can't get it together as long as there's people like that around. We've all got to think in our mind that we've got to f--- these people up and get back everything that's owing to us.
> (18 year old black Briton, quoted in Gillman, 1973)

> Then I had to do some more stealing because I was broke. I broke into a Baker Street flat ... but I didn't get any money. I was tired - like an old man, because I was on the streets. I had that kind of attitude of not caring what became of me. I was taking drugs now. I was taking pills.
> (22 year old black Briton quoted in Hines, 1973: 39)

> I've got five convictions. Two of them is stupidness - sus, receiving ice-cream. The other three were robbery and I didn't do any of them. On one I spend six months on remand and I went to the Old Bailey and the jury find me guilty and the judge fine me 10 shillings. Ten shillings and I spend six months inside and the judge have the cheek to ask me if I had the ten bob on me now .... I never used to hate white people. I still don't hate all of them. But it's them who teach me how to hate ... I've done 15 months inside altogether, locked away for things I never done. How can I like people who locked me away?
> (an 18 year old Jamaican youth, quoted in Gillman, 1973)

> When you do it, most of the time you do it for some money ... When you ain't got nothing at all and you get a pound it's a lot of money ..... You want to go out tonight and you ain't got no way of getting any money and you're just walking down a road thinking of a way to get some money and all of a sudden you see this guy and you say well .....
> (Unidentified black youth, quoted in Gillman, 1973)

There is not just one culture in society, any more than there is one idea of right and wrong. There may be a minimum agreed definition of what conduct people are not willing to accept as allowable, and this may be contained in some parts of the law, but much law in its definition of serious crime reproduces the values of the culture subscribed to by those in authority. What is normal in one culture, may be deviant in another. This may include family patterns, ideas of property, and even the acceptability of violence. Often, the person who appears in court accused of criminal activity has done no more than what the cultures available to him have defined as the natural and normal thing to do.

Crucial here are the cultural options open to the individual through the cultures to which he has access. Such cultures may stem from youth, class, ethnic or simple geographical groupings: an individual may have just one or several cultures available, and each culture may present clear or ambiguous moral values. Again, we are not trying to say that every criminal act is simply explained by the cultural situation of the individual, only that this factor needs to be taken into account, particularly where the individual has little access to cultures which are law-abiding.

Structures and cultures rarely receive much attention in sentencing policy, except as vague references to "keeping bad company" or "having a bad environment". Much more stress is placed on the individual's private life: school record, psychiatric state, and, especially, family circumstances. There is some attempt here to explain "what has gone wrong", but the overall perspective is one which sees the individual in a very limited social situation, tenuously tied to society

by a few basic transmitters of moral values, which can easily fail through some malfunctioning or lack of response from the individual. There is thus in vogue a common-sense about the "broken-family" as a cause of crime. This common-sense is limited and uneasy. It is limited, because it is never allowed to *wholly* explain an extreme form of crime, such as violence. There are still some acts which are 'beyond the pale", and the tendency is to revert to ideas of savagery and moral turpitude. It is uneasy because not all "broken" families lead to crime, and it can never thus be a sufficient explanation in itself.

This vacillation results from a miscomprehension about the role of *biography* in an individual's total life-situation. It has no conception of structure or culture, and thus has no context in which to situate a particular biography. It implies, indeed, a rather curious image of how society works: we are all, it would appear, more or less alone, struggling with the devil within us, and saved only by the strictures and warmth of family, friend and teachers. The whole social context of crime can never be grasped from such a standpoint.

For us, biography is the network of personal circumstances, decisions, and (mis)fortunes which occur within a situation already highly structured and with a limited number of available cultural options.

> One night when we came out of the club in Bayswater it was raining heavily. We were hoping to go on the tube (to sleep); but it was closed. So we walked up the road a bit and came to an entrance to a block of really luxurious flats. When you enter the foyer, carpets were on the floor and all that.
> We sat on the couch and closed the front door, but it was still a bit drafty. So we thought we should get the lift and go to the top, and then we came back down. We sat down in the foyer where we were before. We sat there for about half an hour and two policemen walked by and saw us. They came in.
> They said they would like to search us. We asked them why, since we hadn't done anything. They said we were loitering with intent to steal. They searched us and found nothing.
> So we got in the police car, which the first policeman phoned for. While we were sitting in the car, two other policemen went upstairs and investigated. They stayed for a while and came back and said that they saw a telephone box with scratches on it. They said that that was what we were trying to break into. We told them that we didn't even know that there was a telephone box. So they took us to Paddington Green Police Station and charged us.
> The next morning we went to court and they remanded us. We went to Ashford Remand Centre. Two weeks later they remanded us again, so we kept going back to court. Finally the case came up and it was dismissed because of lack of evidence. So we spent over a month 'inside' for nothing.
> My friend's parents were in court and they knew then what was happening (i.e. that their son had been 'sleeping rough') and he went back to live with them. I was not represented

> in court. I mean, I had legal aid and all that, but my parents were not there.
> So when the case was dismissed, I was on my own, and my welfare officer found me a place. She told me that it was a hostel, and I said 'not another hostel'. She said that there was nothing else she could do.
> She and I went to this hostel. I stayed there for a couple of hours and went out. I didn't go out with the intention of not coming back. I went up to the West End. I saw a friend and he gave me some money and I went up to a club and stayed all night. After that I didn't bother to go back to the hostel for about four days. I returned to the hostel, but I didn't fancy staying there any more.
> I was on my own. I thought - 'What am I going to do?' I didn't really want to steal. As I saw it, only two alternatives were open to me: go back to the hostel; or stay and get myself some money.
> I decided to stay out. I started to steal all over the place. I used to snatch hand-bags. I used to go down to Ladbroke Grove, East London and watch what they were doing. When they snatched handbags, I snatched handbags.
> (from the biography of a - now - 22 year old London-born black of Nigerian parents, quoted in Hines, 1973: 33-35.)

It may ultimately be that biographical factors (including some conscious choice) are crucial in the final thrust towards criminal activity, but the problems which the crime "acts out" have been set by the interaction of structural and cultural factors over and above the individual actor.

How, then, can this framework help us to understand one criminal act or a series of such acts, like a "wave" of muggings? First, we need to see whether distinctive social groupings are involved in such activity. It is no coincidence that many so-called muggings are committed by youths from the twilight or inner-ring city areas, or the barrenness of new council estates. The structural constraints acting on the inhabitants of such areas are severe indeed: to those with little visible stake in society it may seem absurd to behave according to the prescriptions of the status quo. And even more so, if there are available cultures which offer realisable definitions of identity, like that of professional criminals, or a gang. In some cultural situations, 'solutions' may be available, which reject a place in 'normal' society, without *immediately* breaking basic laws. Hippies, for example, could present the model of such an option. This is not to say hippies are virtually criminals, or that a criminal can offer such an articulate critique of society as that profferred by the hippies. It is simply to recognise that becoming a hippy or a criminal is to act out problems set by the individual's life-situation. Which 'solution' is adopted depends on having friends, relatives or other sources of knowledge about the availability and viability of such cultures. This is not to say that such choices are always consciou-

sly made. Nobody sits down and decides "all my troubles will be solved if I become a mugger". But for an unemployed statusless youth in an inner-ring area 'mugging' may be an available means of both making some material gain and gaining some status. And such status may be sought not only from friends, but in a back-hand way, from some important social institutions. If the press were to decide that stuffing potatoes in cats' ears was to be the new juvenile perversion, and could find an example of it being done, then undoubtedly it would occur to some extent, since for some juveniles in some situations any model of deviant behaviour would be taken up. In that way, activities like 'mugging' can be precipitated by certain kinds of media treatment: it becomes the most available model of behaviour for those excluded from conventional models.

Of course, the predisposition to such behaviour has to be present, and there is no doubt that some purely biographical factors, such as the absence of a stable father-figure *can* in *certain situations* be crucial, although in *others* where different structural and cultural conditions apply, it may not be so important in shaping the child's future life. (The absence of a father is always problematic in our society, because of an obsession with the nuclear family.) Precisely what we have been insisting here is that crime can only be understood as a social activity with the actor placed in a total situation: not just where he lives or how he got on at school or whether he had a job or how he related to his father, but all of these and more, together in a total life situation. Of course, to ask that is to ask for a totally new way of thinking about crime, which present ruling groups are nowhere near, and likely to resist. We can see this more clearly if we look at the kinds of penal policies which would follow from the framework of understanding we have been outlining.

People who support the Handsworth sentences have often asked those in opposition what they think should have been done with the three boys who committed such a vicious crime. The question seems a fair one, but we would suggest that its basic premise makes it a loaded question. It still begins from a solitary act, isolated from similar acts committed by different individuals, and from other acts committed on different occasions by these individuals. Violent crimes do not drop out of the sky or well up from the satan deep in the breast of every man. They are generally (with the important exception of "crimes of passion") committed by people who have already given fair warning of criminal intent. If a society maintains a basically retributive penal policy with a thin veneer of naive case-work ideology, it runs the risk of failing to identify the crucial factors in someone's life-situation which lead them to criminal behaviour. Without an attempt to

identify and deal with underlying causes, criminal conduct is likely to escalate, until finally society's patience is exhausted, and the guilty party is incarcerated. By this time, things have often been allowed to go too far, and the individual is firmly wedded to crime as a way of life. This is not just a plea for an early warning system, because this would remain ineffective as long as there was no attempt to understand crime comprehensively. Such an effort is unlikely to be made, since consideration of structural and cultural factors brings into question some fundamental aspects of the existing social order, such as the distribution of wealth and power, and unequal access to housing and employment markets.

So, the reply to that question - what should have been done - has to be that lots of different things should have been done earlier, and that anything short of an attempt to change an individual's whole life situation is likely to fail. The charge that such a reply is utopian and fails to deal with the here and now, misses the point. The quarrel here is not just with one particular sentence, or an illiberal penal policy; it is with the whole way crime is being set up as a problem, and the ideas of social stability, human motivation, and legitimate retribution, which underly social response to crime. We cannot offer a 'right' sentence in the framework of a penal system which is based on a wholly erroneous conception of crime. We might be able to offer a complicated strategy of structural and cultural change aimed to open, rather than close, biographical choices, which might reduce the resort to crime as a cultural solution, but such a revolutionary blueprint would be out of place here, and we trust its content would be obvious from what has been said. What we can say is that in this case the continuous failure of the dominant modes of thought to even begin to try to understand the nature of this crime, has resulted in sentences which solve nothing, either for the individuals concerned, or for those wishing to prevent the repetition of such activity. The "detention" sentence is indeed a paradigm of social response to crime: hedging, hypocritical, and, in the last analysis, savage.