



THE FLOWERING OF THE HIPPIES

by Mark Harris

The Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco is not the only place where hippies have congregated for their "summer of love," but it is certainly the biggest, floweriest, and most psychedelic. Journalists have skated the surface of hippie goings-on, but for real insight about the participants and their not altogether relaxed hosts, the ATLANTIC turned to Mark Harris, a resident of San Francisco and the talented author of THE SOUTHPAW, BANG THE DRUM SLOWLY, and TWENTY-ONE TWICE, among other works.

THE hippie "scene" on Haight Street in San Francisco was so very visual that photographers came from everywhere to shoot it, reporters came from everywhere to write it up with speed, and opportunists came from everywhere to exploit its drug addiction, its sexual possibility, and its political or social ferment. Prospective hippies came from everywhere for one "summer of love" or maybe longer, some older folk to indulge their latent hippie tendencies, and the police to contain, survey, or arrest. "Haight" — old Quaker name — rhymed with "hate," but hippies held that the theme of the street was love, and the best of hippies, like the best of visitors and the best of the police, hoped to reclaim and distill the best promise of a movement which might yet invigorate American movement everywhere. It might, by resurrecting the word "love," and giving it a refreshed definition, open the national mind, as if by the chemical LSD, to the hypocrisy of violence and prejudice in a nation dedicated to peace and accord.

It was easier to see than understand: the visual came first, and the visual was so discordant that tourists drove with their cars locked and an alarmed citizenry beseeched the police to clean it out.

It was easy to see that the young men who were hippies on Haight Street wore beards and long hair and sometimes earrings and weird-o granny eye-

glasses, that they were barefoot or in sandals, and that they were generally dirty. A great many of the young men, by design or by accident, resembled Jesus Christ, whose name came up on campaign pins or lavatory walls or posters or bumper stickers. *Are You Bombing With Me, Baby Jesus. Jesus Is God's Atom Bomb.*

The script was "psychedelic." That is to say, it was characterized by flourishes, spirals, and curlicues in camouflaged tones — blues against purples, pinks against reds — as if the hippie behind the message weren't really sure he wanted to say what he was saying. It was an item of hippie thought that speech was irrelevant. *You Don't Say Love You Do It. Those Who Speak Don't Know Those Who Know Don't Speak.* But it was also my suspicion that hippies would speak when they could; meanwhile, their muteness suggested doubt. In one shop the wall was dominated by an old movie advertisement — Ronald Reagan and June Travis in *Love Is in the Air* (Warner Brothers), their faces paper-white, blank, drained. I asked the hippie at the counter why it was there, but she didn't trust herself to try. "It's what you make of it," she said.

It was easy to see that the young women who were hippies were draped, not dressed; that they, too, were dirty from toe to head; that they looked unwell, pale, sallow, hair hung down in strings un-

Photographs on pages 65, 68, and 70 by Jerry Burchard.

washed. Or they wore jeans, men's T-shirts over brassieres. When shoes were shoes the laces were missing or trailing, gowns were sacks, and sacks were gowns. *If You Can't Eat It Wear It.*

A fashion model was quoted in a newspaper as saying, "They don't really exist," who meant to say, of course, "I wish they didn't." The young ladies were experimenting in drugs, in sexual license, living in communal quarters furnished with mattresses. *Praise The Pill. Bless Our Pad.* Girls who might have been in fashion were panhandling. "Sorry, I've got to go panhandle," I heard a hippie lady say, which was not only against the law but against the American creed, which holds that work is virtue, no matter what work you do. Hippie girls gave flowers to strangers, and they encouraged their dirty young men to avoid the war in Vietnam. *Thou Shalt Not Kill This Means You. Caution: Military Service May Be Hazardous To Your Health.*

The shops of the "hip" merchants were colorful and cordial. The "straight" merchants of Haight Street sold necessities, but the hip shops smelled of incense, the walls were hung with posters and paintings, and the counters were laden with thousands of items of nonutilitarian nonsense — metal jewelry, glass beads, dirty pictures, "underground" magazines, photographs of old-time movie stars, colored chalk, dirty combs, kazoos, Halloween masks, fancy matchboxes, odd bits of stained glass, and single shoes. Every vacant wall was a bulletin board for communication among people not yet quite settled ("Jack and Frank from Iowa leave a message here").

The music everywhere was rock 'n' roll out of Beatles, folk, African drums, American pop, jazz, swing, and martial.

Anybody who was anybody among hippies had been arrested for something, or so he said — for "possession" (of drugs), for "contributing" (to the delinquency of a minor), for panhandling, for obstructing the sidewalk, and if for nothing else, for "resisting" (arrest). The principal cause of their conflict with the police was their smoking marijuana, probably harmless but definitely illegal. Such clear proof of the failure of the law to meet the knowledge of the age presented itself to the querulous minds of hippies as sufficient grounds to condemn the law complete.

Hippies thought they saw on Haight Street that everyone's eyes were filled with loving joy and giving, but the eyes of the hippies were often in fact sorrowful and frightened, for they had plunged themselves into an experiment they were uncertain they could carry through. Fortified by LSD (*Better Living Through Chemistry*), they had come far enough to see distance behind them, but no clear course ahead. One branch of their philosophy was Oriental concentration and meditation; now

it often focused upon the question "How to kick" (drugs).

The ennobling idea of the hippies, forgotten or lost in the visual scene, diverted by chemistry, was their plan for *community*. For *community* they had come. What kind of community, upon what model? Hippies wore brilliant Mexican *chalecos*, Oriental robes, and red-Indian headdress. They dressed as cowboys. They dressed as frontiersmen. They dressed as Puritans. Doubtful who they were, trying on new clothes, how could they know where they were going until they saw what fit? They wore military insignia. Among bracelets and bells they wore Nazi swastikas and the German Iron Cross, knowing, without knowing much more, that the swastika offended the Establishment, and no enemy of the Establishment could be all bad. They had been born, give or take a year or two, in the year of Hiroshima.

Once the visual scene was ignored, almost the first point of interest about the hippies was that they were middle-class American children to the bone. To citizens inclined to alarm this was the thing most maddening, that these were not Negroes disaffected by color or immigrants by strangeness but boys and girls with white skins from the right side of the economy in all-American cities and towns from Honolulu to Baltimore. After regular educations, if only they'd want them, they could commute to fine jobs from the suburbs, and own nice houses with bathrooms, where they could shave and wash up.

Many hippies lived with the help of remittances from home, whose parents, so straight, so square, so seeming compliant, rejected, in fact, a great portion of that official American program rejected by the hippies in psychedelic script. *The 19th Century Was A Mistake The 20th Century Is A Disaster.* Even in arrest they found approval from their parents, who had taught them in years of civil rights and resistance to the war in Vietnam that authority was often questionable, sometimes despicable. George F. Babbitt, forty years before in Zenith, U.S.A., declared his hope, at the end of a famous book, that his son might go farther than Babbitt had dared along lines of break and rebellion.

When hippies first came to San Francisco they were an isolated minority, mistrustful, turned inward by drugs, lacking acquaintance beyond themselves. But they were spirited enough, after all, to have fled from home, to have endured the discomforts of a cramped existence along Haight Street, proud enough to have endured the insults of the police, and alert enough to have identified the major calamities of their age.

In part a hoax of American journalism, known even to themselves only as they saw themselves in



the media, they began at last, and especially with the approach of the "summer of love," to assess their community, their quest, and themselves.

They slowly became, in the word that seemed to cover it, polarized, distinct in division among themselves between, on one hand, weekend or summertime hippies, and on the other, hippies for whom the visual scene was an insubstantial substitute for genuine community. The most perceptive or advanced among the hippies then began to undertake the labor of community which could be accomplished only behind the scene, out of the eye of the camera, beyond the will of the quick reporter.

The visual scene was four blocks long on Haight Street. Haight Street itself was nineteen, extending east two miles from Golden Gate Park, through the visual scene, through a portion of the Negro

district known as the Fillmore, past the former campus of San Francisco State College, and flowing at its terminus into Market Street, into the straight city, across the Bay Bridge, and into that wider United States whose values the hippies were testing, whose traditions were their own propulsion in spite of their denials, and whose future the hippies might yet affect in singular ways unimagined by either those States or those hippies. From the corner of Haight and Ashbury Streets it was three miles to Broadway and Columbus, heart of North Beach, where the Beats had gathered ten years before.

The Haight-Ashbury district is a hundred square blocks of homes and parks. One of the parks is the Panhandle of Golden Gate, thrusting itself into the district, preserving, eight blocks long, a green and lovely relief unimpaired by prohibitions against free play by children or the free promenade

of adults along its mall. Planted in pine, maple, redwood, and eucalyptus, its only serious resistance to natural things is a statue honoring William McKinley, but consigned to the farthest extremity, for which, in 1903, Theodore Roosevelt broke the ground.

The Panhandle is the symbolic and spiritual center of the district, its stay against confusion. On March 28, 1966, after a struggle of several years — and by a single vote of the San Francisco Supervisors — the residents of the Haight-Ashbury district were able to rescue the Panhandle from the bulldozer, which would have replaced it with a freeway assisting commuters to save six minutes between downtown and the Golden Gate Bridge.

In one of the few triumphs of neighborhood over redevelopment the power of the district lay in the spiritual and intellectual composition of its population, which tended toward firm views of the necessity to save six minutes and toward a skeptical view of the promise of “developers” to “plant it over” afterward. Apart from the Panhandle controversy, the people of the district had firm views clustering about the conviction that three-story Tudor and Victorian dwellings are preferable to skyscrapers, that streets should serve people before automobiles, that a neighborhood was meant for living as well as sleeping, that habitation implies some human dirt, that small shops foster human acquaintance as department stores don’t, and that schools which are integrated are more educational than schools which are segregated.

One of the effects of the victory of the bulldozer would have been the obliteration of low-cost housing adjacent to the Panhandle, and therefore the disappearance of poorer people from the district. But the people of the Haight-Ashbury failed of enthusiasm. “Fair streets are better than silver,” wrote Vachel Lindsay, leading hippie of Springfield, Illinois, half a century ago, and considered that part of his message central enough to carry it in psychedelic banners on the end pages of his *Collected Poems*:

Fair streets are better than silver.
Green parks are better than gold.
Bad public taste is mob law.
Good public taste is democracy.
A crude administration is damned already.
A bad designer is to that extent a bad citizen.
Let the best moods of the people rule.

The Haight-Ashbury — to give it its San Francisco sound — had long been a favorite residential area for persons of liberal disposition in many occupations, in business, labor, the arts, the professions, and academic life. It had been equally hospitable to avant-garde expression, to racial diversity, and to the Okies and Arkies who came

after World War II. Its polyglot population, estimated at 30,000, was predominantly white, but it included Negroes and Orientals in sizable numbers and general distribution, and immigrants of many nations. Here William Saroyan and Erskine Caldwell had lived.

During the decade of the sixties it was a positive attraction to many San Franciscans who could easily have lived at “better addresses” but who chose the Haight-Ashbury for its congeniality and cultural range. Here they could prove to anyone who cared, and especially to their children, the possibilities of racial integration. The Haight-Ashbury was the only neighborhood in the nation, as far as I know, to send its own delegation — one white man, one Negro woman — to the civil rights March on Washington in 1963.

Wealth and comfort ascended with the hills in the southern portion of the district. In the low, flat streets near the Panhandle, where the hippies lived, the residents were poorer, darker, and more likely to be of foreign extraction. There, too, students and young artists lived, and numbers of white families who had chosen the perils of integration above the loss of their proximity to the Panhandle. With the threat of the freeway many families had moved away and many stores had become vacant, and when the threat had passed, a vacuum remained.

The hippies came, lured by availability, low rents, low prices, and the spirit of historic openness. The prevailing weather was good in a city where weather varied with the contours of hills. Here a hippie might live barefoot most of the months of the year, lounge in sunswept doorways slightly out of the wind, and be fairly certain that political liberals, bedeviled Negroes, and propertyless whites were more likely than neighbors elsewhere to admit him to community.

The mood of the Haight-Ashbury ranged from occasional opposition to the hippies to serene indifference, to tolerance, to interest, and to delight. As trouble increased between hippies and police, and as alarm increased elsewhere in the city, the Haight-Ashbury kept its head. It valued the passions of the young, especially when the young were, as hippies were, nonviolent. No doubt, at least among liberals, it saw something of its own earlier life in the lives of hippies.

Last March the Haight-Ashbury Neighborhood Council, formed in 1957 to meet a crisis similar to the Panhandle controversy, committed itself to a policy of extended patience. It declared that “we particularly resent the official position of law-enforcement agencies, as announced by [Police] Chief Cahill, that hippies are not an asset to the community. The chief has not distinguished among the many kinds of citizens who comprise the

hippie culture. . . . War against a class of citizens, regardless of how they dress or choose to live, within the latitude of the law, is intolerable in a free society. We remember the regrettable history of officially condoned crusades against the Chinese population of San Francisco whose life style did not meet with the approval of the established community and whose lives and property were objects of terrorism and persecution."

If any neighborhood in America was prepared to accommodate the hippies, it was the Haight-Ashbury. On the heights and on the level rich and poor were by and large secure, open, liberal, pro-civil-rights, and in high proportion anti-war. Its U.S. congressman was Philip Burton, a firm and forthright liberal, and its California assemblyman was Willie Brown, a Negro of unquestioned intellect and integrity. Here the hippies might gain time to shape their message and translate to coherence the confusion of the visual scene. If the hippies were unable to make, of all scenes, the Haight-Ashbury scene, then there was something wrong with *them*.

LYSERGIC ACID DIETHYLAMIDE

The principal distinction between the hippies and every other endeavor in utopian community was LSD, which concentrated upon the liver, produced chemical change in the body, and thereby affected the brain. Whether LSD produced physical harm remained an argument, but its most ardent advocates and users (not always the same persons) never denied its potentially dangerous emotional effects. Those effects depended a great deal on the user's predisposition. Among the hippies of San Francisco, LSD precipitated suicide and other forms of self-destructive or antisocial behavior. For some hippies it produced little or nothing, and was therefore a disappointment. For many, it precipitated gorgeous hallucinations, a wide variety of sensual perceptions never before available to the user, and breathtaking panoramic visions of human and social perfection accompanied by profound insights into the user's own past.

It could be manufactured in large quantities by simple processes, like gin in a bathtub, easily carried about, and easily retained without detection. In liquid it was odorless and colorless; in powder it was minute. Its administration required no needles or other paraphernalia, and since it was taken orally, it left no "tracks" upon the body.

Technically it was nonaddictive, but it conspicuously induced in the user — the younger he was, the more so — a strong desire for another "trip": the pleasures of life under LSD exceeded the realities of sober perception. More far-reaching than liquor, quicker for insights than college or

psychiatry, the pure and instant magic of LSD appeared for an interesting moment to capture the mind of the hippies. Everybody loved a panacea.

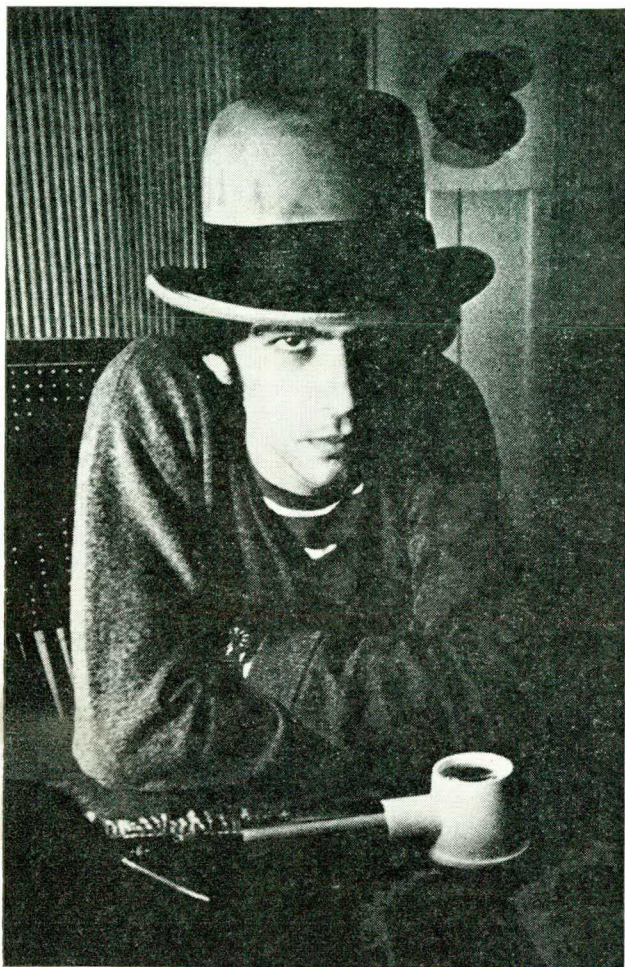
Their text was *The Psychedelic Experience*, by Leary, Metzner, and Alpert, "a manual based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead," whose jacket assured the reader that the book had been completed free of academic auspices. It was likely that the hippies' interest in the book lay, in any case, rather in its use as "manual" than in its historical reference.

Bob Dylan, favorite of many hippies, told in a line of song, "To live outside the law you must be honest." But hippies were Puritan Americans, gorged with moral purpose, and loath to confess that their captivation was basically the pursuit of pleasure. They therefore attached to the mystique of LSD the conviction that by opening their minds to chemical visions they were gaining insights from which society soon should profit.

Hippies themselves might have profited, as anyone might, from LSD in a clinical environment, but the direction of their confidence lay elsewhere, and they placed themselves beneath the supervision mainly of other hippies. Dialogue was confined among themselves, no light was shed upon the meaning of their visions, and their preoccupation became LSD itself — what it did to them last time, and what it might do next. Tool had become symbol, and symbol principle. If the hippie ideal of community failed, it would fail upon lines of a dull, familiar scheme: the means had become the end.

Far from achieving an exemplary community of their own, with connections to existing community, the hippies had achieved only, in the language of one of their vanguard, "a community of acid-heads." If LSD was all the hippies talked about, the outlying community could hardly be blamed for thinking this was all they were. Visions of community seen under LSD had not been imparted to anyone, remaining visible only to hippies, or entering the visual scene only in the form of commentary upon LSD itself, jokes and claims for its efficacy growing shriller with the increase of dependence. But the argument had been that LSD inspired transcendence, that it was, as one hippie phrased it, "a stepping-stone to get out of your environment and look at it."

Under the influence of LSD hippies had written things down, or drawn pictures, but upon examination the writings or the pictures proved less perfect than they had appeared while the trip was on. Great utterances delivered under LSD were somehow unutterable otherwise. Great thoughts the hippies had thought under LSD they could never soberly convey, nor reproduce the startling new designs for happier social arrangements.



Two years after the clear beginnings of the hippies in San Francisco, a date established by the opening of the Psychedelic Shop, hippies and others had begun to recognize that LSD, if it had not failed, had surely not fully succeeded. ("We have serious doubts," said a Quaker report, "whether drugs offer the spiritual illumination which bears fruit in Christlike lives.") Perhaps, as some hippies claimed, their perceptions had quickened, carrying them forward to a point of social readiness. It had turned them on, then off.

WHATEVER the explanation, by the time of the "summer of love" their relationship with the surrounding community had badly deteriorated. The most obvious failure of perception was the hippies' failure to discriminate among elements of the Establishment, whether in the Haight-Ashbury or in San Francisco in general. Their paranoia was the paranoia of all youthful heretics. *Even Paranoids Have Real Enemies*. True. But they saw all the world as straight but them; all cops were brutes,

and everyone else was an arm of the cops. Disaffiliating with all persons and all institutions but themselves, they disaffiliated with all possible foundations of community.

It was only partly true, as hippies complained, that "the Establishment isn't listening to us." The Establishment never listened to anyone until it was forced to. That segment of the Establishment known as the Haight-Ashbury, having welcomed the hippies with friendliness and hope, had listened with more courtesy to hippies than hippies had listened to the Haight-Ashbury.

Hippies had theories of community, theories of work, theories of child care, theories of creativity. Creative hippies were extremely creative about things the city and the district could do for them. For example, the city could cease harassing hippies who picked flowers in Golden Gate Park to give them away on Haight Street. The city replied that the flowers of Golden Gate Park were for all people — were *community* flowers — and suggested that hippies plant flowers of their own. Hippies imagined an all-powerful city presided over by an all-powerful mayor who, said a hippie, "wants to stop human growth." They imagined an all-powerful Board of Supervisors which with inexhaustible funds could solve all problems simultaneously if only it wanted to.

Their illusions, their unreason, their devil theories, their inexperience of life, and their failures of perception had begun to persuade even the more sympathetic elements of the Haight-Ashbury that the hippies perhaps failed of perception in general. The failure of the hippies to communicate reasonably cast doubt upon their reliability as observers, especially with respect to the most abrasive of all issues, their relationship with the police.

Was it merely proof of its basic old rigidity that the Haight-Ashbury believed that community implied social relief, that visions implied translation to social action? *Squares Love, Too: Haight-Ashbury For All People*. So read an answering campaign pin as friction increased. But the hippies, declining self-regulation, aloof, self-absorbed, dumped mountains of garbage on the Panhandle. The venereal rate of the Haight-Ashbury multiplied by six. (The hippies accused Dr. Ellis Sox of the health department of sexual repression.) The danger grew alarmingly of rats, food poisoning, hepatitis, pulmonary tuberculosis, and of meningitis caused by overcrowded housing. "If hippies don't want to observe city and state laws," said Dr. Sox, "let them at least observe a few natural laws."

Hippies behaved so much like visitors to the community that their neighbors, who intended to live in the district forever, questioned whether proclamations of community did not require *acts*

of community. Hippies had theories of love, which might have meant, at the simplest level, muting music for the benefit of neighbors who must rise in the morning for work. Would the Haight-Ashbury once again, if the emergency arose, expend years of its life to retain a Panhandle for hippies to dump their garbage on? Or would it abandon the hippies to the most primitive interpretations of law, permit their dispersion, and see their experiment end without beginning?

At no point was the hippies' failure to seek community so apparent as with relation to the Negroes of the district. With the passage of the civil rights movement from demonstrations to legal implementation excellent opportunities existed for the show of love. What grand new design in black and white had hippies seen under LSD? If Negroes were expected to share with hippies the gestures of love, then hippies ought to have shared with Negroes visions of equal rights.

The burdens of the Negroes of the district were real. Negro tenants *desired* the attention of the health department, *desired* the attention of agencies whom hippies monopolized with appeals for food and housing for the "summer of love." The needs of the Negroes, especially for jobs, appeared to Negroes a great deal more urgent than the needs of white middle-class hippies who had dropped out of affluence to play games of poverty in San Francisco. "Things should be given away free," said a Negro man in a public debate, "to people that *really* need them."

One afternoon, on Masonic Street, a hundred feet off Haight, I saw a Negro boy, perhaps twelve years old, repairing an old bicycle that had been repaired before. His tools lay on the sidewalk beside him, arranged in a systematic way, as if according to an order he had learned from his father. His face was intent, the work was complicated. Nearby, the hippies masqueraded. I mentioned to a lady the small boy at work, the big boys at play. "Yes," she said, "the hippies have usurped the prerogatives of children — to dress up and be irresponsible."

THE POLARIZATION OF THE HIPPIES

A hippie record is entitled *Notes From Underground*. The hippie behind the counter told me that "underground" was a hippie word. He had not yet heard of Dostoevsky, whose title the record borrowed, or of the antislavery underground in America, or of the World War II underground in France. A movement which thought itself the world's first underground was bound to make mistakes it could have avoided by consultation with the past, and there was evidence that the hippies had begun to know it.

Nobody asked the hippies to accept or acknowledge the texts of the past. Their reading revealed their search for self-help, not conducted among the traditional books of the Western world but of the Orient — in *I Ching* and *The Prophet*, and in the novels of the German Hermann Hesse, especially the "Oriental" *Siddhartha*. Betrayed by science and reason, hippies indulged earnestly in the occult, the astrological, the mystical, the horoscopic, and the Ouija. Did hippies know that Ouija boards were a popular fad not long ago?

Or did they know that *The Prophet* of Kahlil Gibran, reprinted seventy-seven times since 1923, lies well within the tradition of American self-help subliterate? No sillier book exists, whose "prose poetry," faintly biblical, offers homiletic advice covering one by one all the departments of life (On Love, On Marriage, On Children, On Giving, On Eating and Drinking, On Work — on and on) in a manner so ambiguous as to permit the reader to interpret all tendencies as acceptable and to end by doing as he pleases, as if with the sanction of the prophet.

Hesse was a German, born in 1877, who turned consciously to romantic expression after age forty, but the wide interest of the hippies in *Siddhartha* is less conscious than Hesse's. To the hero's search for unity between self and nature they respond as German youth responded to Hesse, or as an earlier generation of Americans responded to the spacious, ambiguous outcry of Thomas Wolfe.

Inevitably, they were going through all these things twice, unaware of things gone through before. Inherent in everything printed or hanging in the visual scene on Haight Street was satirical rejection of cultural platitudes, but in the very form and style of the platitudes themselves. Children of television, they parodied it, spoofing Batman, as if Batman mattered. The satire in which they rejoiced was television's own artistic outpost. The walls of Haight Street bore, at a better level, the stamp of *Mad* magazine or collages satirizing the chaos of advertising: but anyone could see the same who turned the pages of *Reader's Digest* fast.

Of all the ways in which hippies began to polarize toward work their withdrawal from the visual scene was most astute. They had begun to learn, after flight, rebellion, and the pleasures of satirizing things they hoped they could reject, that work requires solitude and privacy, and that to work well means to resist the shaping influence of the media, abandoning the visual scene to those whom it gratifies.

The ideal of work — not simply jobs, but meaningful work, work as service — had been a hippie ideal from the outset. The apprehension of quiet, positive acts as meaningful, requiring time and *liaison*, was a more difficult act than parading the

streets in costume. The act of extending community beyond oneself, beyond other hippies, beyond the comfort of drugs to the wider community of diverse color and class was nearer than hippies had thought to the unity of self and nature.

At the start, it was frightening to undertake. Finally, it was instructive and exalting. To share *community*, to arrive finally at the meaning of one's own world, was to feel life from a point of view formerly hidden from oneself, and only partly revealed by mystical reading. Self-regulation was more satisfying than regulation by the police, and conformity to enduring objectives more liberating finally than chemical visions.

The hippies patrolled their garbage — the "sweep-in" — and modulated their music. If such acts were this side millennium, they were nevertheless gestures of community reflecting an emergence of the hippies from the isolation of their first two years in San Francisco. Acquaintance with the straight community increased as work and work projects proliferated. Acquaintance produced degrees of trust and accurate identity. Generalizations failed. Not all straights were pure straight, even as hippies differed one from another.

The life of the hippie community began to reveal a history of its own. It had evolved through flight, drugs, and conflict, and back into the straight world, which it now knew in a manner different from before. To direct the Hip Job Co-op, the Free Store, public feedings in the Panhandle, to produce even one memorable edition of the *Oracle* (Volume I, Number 7, preserving the essence of hippie theory in debate among Ginsberg, Leary, Snyder, and Watts) required a pooling of skills, resources, and confrontation with the straight community. It meant, even, coming face to face with the telephone company, and it meant, as well, the ironic recognition that necessary work invited imitation of the very processes hippies had formerly

despised. To purchase houses to shelter hippies, food to feed them, required compromise with the community, a show of dependable intentions. In the language of Leonard Wolf, San Francisco State College professor who organized formal instruction among hippies, it required "coming to terms with the ethical quandary of money." Projects with long-range implications, such as the purchase of rural sites for hippie communities, required leadership, planning, authority, discipline, and more or less continuous sobriety.



At some moments the process of learning was almost visible. "The American passion is murder," said a hippie spokesman, challenging a straight audience of physicians, lawyers, teachers, and others, including police officers, to rise and shout him down. None of his listeners betrayed alarm — some feared that his words were too true. "I would like to see the American Establishment give more examples of love, and fewer pronouncements." He appeared suddenly to be aware that he had heard these sentiments before, and indeed it was a complaint some members of the Establishment had made forever and ever. Hippies were scarcely the first to discover hypocrisy.

A hippie said, at the same meeting, "The American empire is driving our sons and daughters to Haight Street. All America knows is profit and property. We all

know . . ." — that is, we all just this minute realized; that was to say, *he* just this minute realized — "we all know all we need to know to act, but we don't act. Everyone knows what's wrong . . ." perceiving in that moment a straight community which shared with him, among other things, its powerlessness. It, too, had fought its battles with authority, and he saw it now in its diversity, rather than as monolith.

At such moments of meeting hippies knew sensations of reconciliation and escape from their own isolation. They learned, as American minor-

ities before them had learned, that nothing was more instructive about human life than to have been a minority group, and to have emerged. Acquaintance clarified: straights had not so much opposed drugs or dirt as their inefficiency; runaway children broke real hearts; plagues of rats, by the agreement of mankind, were unaesthetic; straights, too, resisted work, yearned for varieties of love, and found the balance. Frank Kavanaugh, teacher at a Catholic high school, resident of the Haight-Ashbury for fourteen years, summarized the positive aspects of polarization in a public statement widely applauded. He wrote in part:

I would estimate that even though there have been many unwelcome incidents occasioned by both the old and new community, there has still arisen an area of understanding and mutual appreciation. I would describe it in this fashion. The new community by its rejection of certain middle-class attitudes of comfort, security, position, and property has pointed out to us our exaggerated concern for these material distractions. In their effort to create new life styles based on personalism and simple awareness of the basic joys of sensible creation, they make us more aware of the overlooked pleasures of colors, sounds, trees, children, smiles. Yet I think that they have learned much from us too. They have learned that the neighborhood in which they have chosen to demonstrate their rejection of middle-class conformity is not such a bad neighborhood after all. If they have been the victims of generalized attitudes by authority, they have also been the perpetrators of generalized attitudes themselves. Not all middle-class people are squares. Generally speaking, upon the close, personal examination of any square by any hippie, the sharp corners soften considerably and the image of a human being appears. . . . Given more time and the absence of undue friction, the dialogue could bear rich fruit. The old and new could form one community, unique and rich in human resources, a community that could demonstrate that such a neighborhood could flourish despite the system; indeed, one that could bear the seed for a joyous revolution of attitudes in the entire city and produce a large urban community based on the real needs of its inhabitants.

The hippies had come for help. The freedom of cities had always attracted a significant segment of every generation seeking to resolve American dilemmas unrestrained by commitments to family obligations in home communities. New York and Chicago had always known waves of hippies fleeing Winesburg, Ohio. In San Francisco, as hippies engaged in public dialogue, they forced the city to examine and modify standing practices. Laws governing marijuana became exposed for their paradoxes. Accurate information on drugs became an objective. Police methods were reviewed. Perhaps the most useful debate involved new and imaginative uses of public facilities: a city which

could entertain and amuse immense conventions, sporting crowds, providing for visitors luxurious frivolities of every kind, could, for example, release Kezar Stadium, site of professional football during certain seasons, to the tents of hippies for their "summer of love." Haight-Ashbury Assemblyman Willie Brown, in a letter to the Supervisors, placed in perspective the nature of the conflicting forces: "It appears to me that you are in danger of making a very fundamental mistake concerning both your own identity and that of the young people who are coming to us. *They* are not some horde of invading foreigners. They are our children, yours and mine, exercising their right to move freely about a country which will soon be very much their own. You for your part are not some select group of medieval chieftains who can, at will, close up your town and withdraw behind the walls of your own closed society. The City of St. Francis deserves better from you. Whether we like or dislike, agree or disagree with the 'Hip' community is not the issue here. The issue *is* whether you can by fiat declare a minority unwelcome in our community. If you declare against these young people today, what minority is going to bear the brunt of your discrimination tomorrow?"

THE COP'S DIRECTIVE

Somewhat forgotten among general fears was the hippies' unwavering adherence to the ideal of nonviolence. Miraculously, they retained it in a community and in a world whose easiest tendency was guns. For that virtue, if for no other, they valuably challenged American life. If they did not oppose the war in Vietnam in the way of organized groups, they opposed it by the argument of example, avoiding violence under all circumstances. They owned no guns. By contrast, the manner in which the major Establishment of San Francisco approached the hippies chillingly suggested the basis of American failure abroad: never questioning its own values, lacking the instinct for difficult dialogue, it sought to suppress by exclusion; exclusion failing, it was prepared to call the police.

The trouble on the visual scene was drugs, and drugs brought cops; the trouble was runaway children (some as young as ten years old) lost among hippies, and runaway children brought cops; dirty books brought cops. The trouble was hazardous housing, which brought the health department, and in the wake of the health department, cops.

The trouble with the police, from the point of view of the hippies, was false arrest, illegal arrest, incitement to arrest, cops with swinging clubs, obscene cops diseased by racial hatred, and the tendency of any appearance by police to stimulate

excitement where none had been. They accused cops of accepting bribes from drug peddlers and then arresting users, and they singled out a few officers whose zeal for the enforcement of standard morality exceeded reason. The cop was the enemy-visible in a marked car, whom hippies viewed as the living symbol of all the vice and hypocrisy of the Establishment.

The San Francisco cop had never lived in the Haight-Ashbury. Now, by and large, he lived in the Richmond, the Sunset, or within the thirty-mile suburban radius established by law, in a house with a patch of grass and a garage with an oil-proof floor he might live long enough to pay for. He earned \$9000 for a forty-nine-week year, and he would receive a pension at age sixty-five, or after thirty years of service. He read his Hearst newspaper and watched television and went to church and Candlestick Park. He hated the sound of sirens: his occupational hazard was heart failure at an early age from too many surges of adrenalin.

For the San Francisco cop the sixties had been, said one, "the age of riots," not food riots, not labor strikes, for objectives or upon principles he understood, but disorders emanating from obscure causes and upheld for their justice by those elements of the community the cop had always associated with normal process and quietude. Said the same cop: "I am caught in the bind of history."

The first significant confrontation of the decade between police and the new antagonist occurred on Friday, May 13, 1960, in the rotunda of city hall, where several hundred persons had gathered to attend, in a spirit of protest, a hearing of a House Committee on Un-American Activities. Denied admission to the hearing room, the crowd sang, chanted, and appeared to represent potential violence. Four hundred policemen, a contingent larger than the gathering itself, dispersed the crowd with clubs and fire hoses, jailed more than fifty persons, brought one to trial (a Berkeley student) — and failed to convict him.

But to the astonishment of the cop, in so clear a case, instead of commendation from a grateful public for having quelled a disorder, he was abused for his "brutality." The next day thousands of persons gathered at various points of the city to protest not only the continued presence of the subcommittee, but also the cop, the two causes becoming one. In the years which followed, all issues were to be repeatedly merged with the issue of police action: the cop himself became an issue.

The San Francisco Police Department, between 1960 and 1967, undertook liberal reforms never dramatic enough to please its critics. Its leadership had always been proud of the department's flexibility, its openness to innovation. It was the *servant* of the city. Now, in a new climate, it in-

tended to acquaint itself with new problems, especially the problems of racial or temperamental minorities.

The creation in 1962 of a Community Relations Unit, which grew from two members to thirteen, was an experiment of remarkable promise and frequent achievement. Its goal was to anticipate commotion rather than to react in panic, to understand the aims of dissident groups, and to survey rather than to arrest. The role of the unit was to provide "feedback" between police and public, often by sponsoring or attending public meetings where dialogue might ensue between citizen and cop, who had never before met.

The unit wore no uniform, made no arrests, and identified itself wherever it went. Honorably, it never carried back hard information to the department. It had somewhat the aspect of the intellectual wing of the police, asking *why*, never *who*, though the position was relative, and in the short run it was a long way down the line from the new, informed, even theoretical cop to the rank-and-file cop in the car, riding scared, feeling himself surrounded by alien and sinister forces, feeling eyes of contempt and hatred upon him, anxious for his own safety, and moved finally to rely upon the same old weapons he still treasured above all sociology, all theory, and all goodwill.

He was a better-informed, more feeling cop than he had been eight years before, but he could never quite remain abreast of history. He had learned to accept the aspirations of Negroes, but he was now confronted by hippies, who were patently and undeniably breaking laws for reasons beyond the cop's comprehension. The Beats, who were the forerunners of the hippies, had obstructed the sidewalks of North Beach and offended cops by their strange untidiness, but they had gathered in a traditional bohemian quarter, and they were *beat*, they admitted it, prepared to flee.

The instinct of the cop was ancient: break the law, be punished. Typical of the citizenry of San Francisco, his heart the repository of all populist values, the cop would uphold the law at every stage of its interpretation. In the main, he transcended his emotions. He waited to see whether the hippies would triumph over their visual scene, whether their shift from street to community would occur before the Haight-Ashbury or the city beyond arrived at last at disenchantment. If the Haight-Ashbury abandoned the hippies the mood of the city at large would be released in the direction of his own gut responses. Then the anxiety of the cop would be shared by all powers, the nervous system of the cop, the city, and the Haight-Ashbury would vibrate upon one note. Then the directive of the cop would be clear. Then the cop *would* move in.

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