After the Counterculture :

From political protesters to music consumers-

Middle class youth subcultures 1975 -1995

Nigel Bowen (B.A)

School of English , Linguistics and Media

Submitted -   January 1998

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Two   **p 72**

Epigoni in Interregnum

Chapter Three   **p 115**

Contemporary Australian PMC Youth Subculture

Summary

This thesis examines the phenomenon of Australian middle class youth subcultures in the period between 1975-1995 . The introduction discusses the antecedents of contemporary middle class subcultures , the work of American , British and Australian theorists and the approach and objective of the author . Chapter One examines the economic , educational and social changes that have occurred since the mid 1970s and the now vulnerable position of middle class youth . Chapter Two provides some possible reasons for the lack of political radicalism amongst contemporary middle class subculturalists . Chapter Three discusses the Gothic , Feral , Raver and Indie subcultures analysing the activities , affective investments and consciousnesses of their members , as well as noting continuities and discontinuities with the Counterculture of the 1960s/70s . Chapter Four investigates to what degree contemporary middle class youth subcultures can be seen as counter-hegemonic . Chapter Five explores the possible reasons for the increasing popularity of subcultural subjectivities amongst middle class youth over the last twenty years , the nature of those subjectivities and the significance of subcultural style . The Conclusion offers some suggestions on possible future areas of research .

A wide range of subcultures , drawing their membership from diverse groups exist in contemporary Australia . It is possible only to examine a small proportion of these subcultures . This thesis confines itself to examining four subcultures which draw their membership from middle class youth - individuals who have chosen (for a certain period of time) to differentiate themselves from what they perceive as 'mainstream'

Australian society . The study of those subcultures which draw their membership from groups more permanently and comprehensively exiled to the margins of Australian society and differentiated from the mass of their fellow citizens by more than style , leisure activities and musical taste is a significantly different project and one beyond the scope of reference of this thesis . Accordingly the author makes no attempt to examine subcultures primarily drawing their membership from the gay and lesbian community , religious or ethnic minorities , the indigenous population or those at the nadir of the class structure such as the homeless and street kids .

INTRODUCTION

1. Antecedents of Contemporary Middle class youth Subculture -

Clarke et al (1976:13-14) have defined subcultures thus -

sub-cultures are sub-sets - smaller , more localised and differentiated

structures , within one or other of the larger cultural networks . . . Sub-cultures must

exhibit a distinctive enough shape and structure to make them identifiably different from

their 'parent' culture . They must be focussed around certain activities , values , certain

uses of material artefacts , territorial spaces etc , which significantly differentiate them

from the wider culture .

More recently Brake (1985:8) has similarly defined subcultures as groups "where there is

some form of organised and recognised constellation of values , behaviour and actions

which is responded to as differing from prevailing norms " . Brake's (1985) and Clarke et

al's (1976) definitions would seem to be the most adequate , least problematic and most

widely accepted definitions presently available[1] . While the social phenomenon of

subcultures may be long established in various contexts there seems little point attempting

to equate contemporary non-conformist groups with those that existed in distant

historical periods in far different - technological , material , political and religious -

circumstances . Writers on Punk and the Counterculture[2] (Esler 1971, Yinger 1982,

Hewison 1986 , Marshall 1992, Marcus 1989) have been given to noting the similarities

between late twentieth century counterculturalists and subculturalists the landless rural and proudly urban poor of medieval European Christendom who were members of politico-religious movements such as The Heresy of the Free Spirit , the Anabaptists , Tabourites , Diggers and Ranters . (Similar parallels could also be drawn between these groups and contemporary youth subcultures such as the Ferals) . While it is instructive to note the similarity between the values and activities of non - conformists of the middle ages of those the twentieth century it is misleading to suggest the movements formed by the adult and often middle aged , illiterate vagabonds of Feudal Christendom , which were generally regarded as heretical and treasonous by Church and State and ruthlessly persecuted as such (see Yinger 1982 , Marshall 1992) , are proto forms of those subcultures later to be created by educated middle class youth in technologically advanced industrial or post industrial secular capitalist democracies .

It is with democratic and industrial revolutions , the decline of religion , the emergence of the bourgeoisie , the spread of university education and systems of mass communication in the nineteenth century that we see the emergence of subcultural groups bearing a significant similarity to those which were later promulgated by middle class youth in the twentieth century .One of the first clearly identifiable middle class youth subcultures to emerge appears to have been that which cohered around the *Burschenschaft* (Student union) Movement which existed in Germany between 1815 - 1819 . Its members - young male bourgeois university students - embraced a subcultural style made up of long hair and moustaches , unwashed skin and the rough costume of the real *Volk* (ie members of the class beneath them) topped of with a long dagger or black ,

red and gold sash hanging from the hip . Instead of participating in the prevailing student culture of Fraternities , beer drinking , duelling and brawling , those in the *Burschenschaft* prized physical fitness , believed in a muscular Christianity emphasising gymnastic exercises and engaged in reverent study of great Teutonic works . Much of their time was spent in vigorous hymn singing and bellowing marching songs with radical lyrics . In a still divided and backward Germany the liberal nationalist *Burschenschafter* believed in egalitarianism , individual freedom and unification of the Germanies into a single nation . They even held the first youth Festival -the Wartburg festival of 1817 . Though those involved in the *Burschenschaft* had strong political and religious beliefs and agendas they more closely resembled members of a subculture with their spectacular style, narrow age range of membership , enthusiasm for certain forms of art particularly music and tribalism than a religious community or political organisation (see Esler 1971) .

The 1830s saw the emergence of arguably the first subculture without any obvious political or religious agenda - the first of the 'drop out' bohemias . In 1820s France the founding intellectual generation of French Romanticism - Dumas , Balzac , Berlioz , Delacroix and Hugo emerged . During the next decade sections of male , bourgeois French youth adopted the Romanticism expressed in the new art as a way of life . The French Romantics , known as *les Bouzingos* , were similar to the Gothics who were to emerge a century and a half later in that they adopted a fantastic style of fashion , clothing themselves in exotic fabrics such as satin and velvet and displaying a wardrobe with clear historical or artistic references - Robespierrean waistcoats , Renaissance

capes , trunk hose , the kind of doublets featured in Reubens' paintings and Spanish cloaks . Like the Gothics they were also fascinated with death and contemptuous of Christianity and were popularly believed to frequent graveyards and dissection rooms , wave human shinbones about and drink out of skulls (see Esler (1971) and Yinger (1982)) . Like the Gothics they also emerged in a period of reaction following a period of high revolutionary hopes for a socialist Utopia . The subculture cohered around the work playwrights , poets and novelists and came to public attention with the opening of Hugo's scandalously non-Classical play <u>Hernani</u> in 1830 . The Bohemians rejected the conformity , materialism , careerism , conservatism and philistinism of their class and dropped out - abandoning their studies at the university , medical school , law school or polytechnic their Fathers had sent them to , refusing to find respectable employment in the professions , civil service or business , living in slum districts and subsisting on small allowances while indulging their artistic pretensions . As with most of their successors they had a hedonistic lifestyle and philosophy of aestheticism .

A variety of youth organisations that were to emerge throughout the nineteenth century , notably the European student unions of 1848 and the Nihilists and *Narodniks* of 1860's and 1870's Russia , share similarities with contemporary middle class subcultures though they are most accurately viewed as political movements whose members displayed a distinct style rather than subcultures . Less overtly political and more romantic groups such as the *Wandervogel* , Futurists and decadent aesthetes of Victorian England which emerged during the fin de siecle and early twentieth century were

much more similar to contemporary subcultures though still at that time very much an elite indulgence - the preserve of aristocratic or upper middle class youth , accessible and of interest to only a minutely small segment of the population . By the twentieth century the fundamental patterns for the subcultures created by middle class educated youth had been established . All that remained was for these subcultures to grow from being the coteries of a few hundred or at most few thousand youths found in a specific national context to attracting a mass 'membership' spread across a variety of economically , socially and politically diverse nations .

The first half of the twentieth century saw the emergence of what might be described as State sponsored youth subcultures - the first , longest lasting and most famous of these organisations being the scouting movement . Powell's organisation attempted to encourage nationalist , imperialist , generally conservative and , in particular , anti-socialist attitudes in British youth - particularly working class youth . Though the scouting movement never achieved a broad base of support amongst the working class youth it was aimed at it was successful in attracting a significant proportion of middle and lower middle class youth (Murdock and McCron 1976) . In 1930's Germany , the Nazi Party , much of whose support in the previous decade had come from university students in particular and youth in general , built a youth movement that included individuals from all classes and by 1938 had a membership of over 7 700 000 (Esler 1971) . The *Hitler-Jugend* was massively successful in directing the affective investments of the nation's youth into Fascism and Fuhrer-worship . The equivalent Soviet organisation , the

Komsomol , attracted an even larger membership and was equally successful in directing youth into attitudes and behaviours approved of by the State (Esler 1971) .

The post-war period with its shared prosperity and the emergence of an increasingly long 'moratorium' period between childhood and the assumption of adult responsibilities , such as full time employment and a family , for individuals from all class backgrounds and especially for educated middle class youth saw an exponential increase in the number of youth subcultures coming to being and recruiting a large scale membership from otherwise normative suburban youth . The complicated relationship of post-Counterculture middle class youth subcultures to their immediate predecessors which existed between 1945 -1975 will be explored in detail below .

2. Australian Subculture and Subcultural Studies -

While a significant proportion of the 160 000 individuals transported to Australia during the early stages of the Colony's history were members of criminal subcultures and oppositional political groups prior to their forced emigration it appears few had the opportunity or inclination to form visibly 'subversive' organisations in their new homeland , with the noted exception of those escapee male convicts who formed themselves into gangs of bushrangers in the early decades of the nineteenth century . The primitive and difficult conditions of a penal colony with a largely agrarian economy were hardly conducive to the emergence of youth subcultures and it is not until the advent of

industrialisation and the accompanying emergence of an urban proletariat in the later half of the Nineteenth century that a distinct and fully fledged subculture was to emerge in Australia - the Larrikin Pushes that existed between the 1850's and 1880's made up of working class youth between the ages of 15 and 30 (see Finch (1993)) . There is little documentation of any broadly established subcultural activity which may have taken place between 1890 and 1950 ; with both middle class and working class non-conformists typically coalescing around various types of progressive political organisations which attracted a strong following from the 1890s depression and birth of the labour movement onwards . As Murray (1978) and Stratton (1992) have observed there was no 'lost generation ' in 1920s Australia and no real equivalent to the iconoclastic , hedonistic and apolitical subcultures that emerged amongst upper class youth in Europe in the aftermath of WWI or in Prohibition America . While working class youth may have continued to gather in gangs on street corners during the first half of the twentieth century they did not cohere together in fully fledged subcultures similar to the Pushes .

It was not until the post war period that distinct youth subcultures again began to emerge and attract attention in Australia . The late 1940s saw the emergence of the working class Bodgies and Widgies and the early 1950s the beginnings of the middle class subculture which became known as the Sydney Push . From the mid 1960s onwards involvement with some type of youth subculture was to be part of adolescence for a significant proportion of both working and middle class Australian youth . Over the last two decades a bewildering array of youth subcultures have emerged - some briefly , some

for more prolonged periods . These subcultures have typically cohered around genres of popular music - dance , hip hop , Indie , Gothic , Thrash , Heavy metal and/or activities such as motorbike riding , car racing , surfing , dancing and/or ethnicity (especially in the case of more recently arrived immigrant groups such as the Vietnamese , Lebanese and Pacific Islanders) .

Despite the long history of youth subcultures in Australia and their widespread popularity in recent decades amongst youth from both genders and from a wide range of class and ethnic backgrounds they have received little attention . Interest , be it academic , journalistic , artistic or legal , in Australian subcultures seems to have peaked in the 1880's , when the Larrikin Pushes were viewed as a serious threat to law and order , and a potential catalyst to a wider and overtly political working class mobilisation by concerned middle class observers , and been in decline ever since . Certainly there has never been a serious concerted attempt to understand and explain the phenomenon of youth subculture by a school of academics in Australia as has occurred in other countries . Post-war youth subcultures in general and post-Counterculture subcultures in particular have received scant academic attention from sociologists and cultural studies theorists and only a small number of books and articles examining this vitally important aspect of Australian youth and popular culture presently exist .

Mc Donald's 1951 B.A thesis The Bodgie appears to have the distinction of being the first academic analysis of a post-war Australian subculture carried out . A.E

Mannings 1958 work <u>The Bodgie - A study in psychological abnormality</u> appears to be the first book written on a post-war Australian youth subculture . The book features a series of case studies of juvenile delinquent , supposedly psychologically disturbed , bodgies and widgies overlaid with moralising commentary from Manning (1958:6) , a conservative psychologist , on " the unhappy 'youth in revolt' in a neurotic world , a world that has lost too many of the eternal verities in an insane scramble in the service of Mammon" . Manning (1958:6) discusses the subculturalists' "disturbed viewpoint and the reasons for it " . Stratton was to give a more balanced account of the subculture in his 1992 book <u>The Young Ones : Working-Class Culture , Consumption and the Category of Youth</u> . Clare and Brennan also discuss the emergence of the subculture briefly in their 1995 history of the postwar Australian Jazz scene <u>Bodgie Dada and the Cult of Cool</u> . Incredibly the Sydney Push , a seminal influence on two generations of Australian intellectuals , academics , artists , writers and political activists has had only one book , Coombs thoroughgoing 1996 work <u>Sex and Anarchy : The life and death of the Sydney Push</u>, and two theses , Balzidis's (1974) <u>Sydney Intellectual Radicalism - A Quest for Change</u> and White's (1980) <u>Sydney Libertarianism : a history and critique</u> devoted to it .

There appear to be only three scholarly articles and two books in existence devoted to post - Counterculture Australian youth subcultures . The Gothic subculture as it emerged in late 1970s Melbourne has evocatively described (though not analysed in any sociological sense) by Riley (1992) in 'Death Rockers of the world unite ! 1978-80 - punk rock or no punk rock ? ' . Murphie and Scheer (1992) have similarly , though with

more academic rigour charted the birth and development of the dance party and Rave

subculture that cohered it in late 1980s metropolitan Australia in 'Dance parties : capital ,

culture and stimulation ' and Maxwell and Bambrick (1994) have incisively exposed the

media generated (rather than organic) development of the Australian hip hop subculture in

' Discourses of Culture and Nationalism in Sydney Hip Hop ' .

Youth Subcultures : Theory , History and the Australian Experience

(1993) is a collection of twenty four short articles (some previously published in the

journal Youth Studies Australia) focusing on a variety contemporary and historical ,

working and middle class , male and female , ethnic and school based subcultures written

by a collection of academics , school teachers , youth workers and political activists .

Unfortunately the selection offers no in depth serious attempt to theorise the phenomenon

of Australian subculture and only a perfunctory overview emerges from the book . Much

of the analysis is , even within the context of a 1500 - 4000 word article aimed at a lay

audience , unsatisfactorily simplistic and superficial . Moore's (1994) The Lads in Action

is an ethnographic account of the author's time with a number of working class English

immigrant Perth skinheads . Moore (1994:4) generally succeeds in his aim of providing a -

microsociological account of how the members of an urban youth

subculture order their life and an interpretation of the reasons for the development and

perpetuation of their distinctive style

but fails to engage with macrosociological issues such as ideology , hegemony and resistance which need to addressed in any complete account of subculture .

While books and articles revolving around popular music , youth and youth culture in Australia frequently make some reference to subcultures , typically this is done only in passing as an addendum to some more important subject . Those few authors who have attempted to analyse an Australian subculture have had only the theoretical work of foreign academics , produced in reference to societies significantly different to Australia , to draw on . Tellingly the few examples of academic analysis of Australian subculture that have been produced typically cite the canonical texts of the University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) but rarely refer to any Australian works . Australian subcultures have not even attracted much intelligent attention from outside the Academy . The high-brow , so called 'style press ' , in the UK and to some extent in the U. S have frequently carried serious analyses on subcultures and their socio-political significance authored by CCCS alumni such as Hebdige and Parsons or by writers obviously well acquainted both classic CCCS work and more contemporary academic (generally post structuralist) theory .

No such interest has been demonstrated by the Australian media which has generally confined itself to descriptive rather than explanatory accounts on the rare occasions it has attempted to examine youth subcultures . Neither , unlike their larrikin predecessors , have contemporary subculturalists attracted much artistic attention .

Subculturalists are curiously absent from the cast of youthful characters found in much Australian television programming and nor are they commonly represented in the Nation's literature , drama , cinema or visual arts . One of the few recent examples of an Australian artist examining subcultures is the work of social realist writer-director Geoffrey Wright . His 1992 film <u>Romper Stomper</u> and 1995 film <u>Metal Skin</u> looked , respectively , at the lives of working class skinheads and drag racers . The former was a commercial success and generated considerable media attention , though this focused more on the motives of Wright and the possible negative effects his work could have on its audience rather than any examination of how and why the violent , racist and right wing skinhead subculture appeals to a section of disenfranchised Anglo-Celtic working class youth . His more recent work failed to attract either the audience or media attention of its predecessor .

3. American and British Subcultural Studies .

American and British academics have been far less reticent than their Australian counterparts in examining youth groups . The study of post war youth subcultures can be divided into three distinct stages . The first stage - that of the Liberal American School can be seen to have lasted from 1955 to 1972 . Classic texts such as (A) Cohen's 1955 book <u>Delinquent Boys : The Culture of the Gang</u> , Miller's article 'Lower-class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency ' , Cloward and Ohlin's 1960 book <u>Delinquency and Opportunity : A Theory of Delinquent Gangs</u> , Matza and Sykes 1961 article ' Juvenile Delinquency and Subterranean Values ' and Downes 1966

work The Delinquent Solution all argued in a variety of ways that gangs provided consolation and compensation for working class youth . Underachieving at school and realising the implausibility of their achieving the major cultural goal of American society - material success - some working class youth abandoned the 'correct' middle class values of industriousness , a willingness to delay gratification , respect for authority and the law , conformity etc . These 'corner boys ' attempted to combat their alienation and sense of failure and achieve the sense of status denied to them elsewhere within the confines of delinquent gangs . For the liberal theorists this "reaction formation" (ie inversion of middle class values and stressing of "subterranean " ones) amongst working class youth was a cause for concern .

(P) Cohen's seminal 1972 article ' Sub-Cultural Conflict and Working Class Community ' marked the end of the first stage and the beginning of a distinctly British Gramscian , Western Marxist theoretical perspective on youth subcultures . This second stage lasted from 1972 to 1979 during which time a number of writers associated with the CCCS wrote at length on "spectacular" British working class youth subcultures . Of this wide variety of books and articles the two canonical texts are the 1975 publication Resistance through Rituals - Youth subcultures in post-war Britain and Hebdige's 1979 work Subculture : The Meaning of Style . As is sometimes overlooked , the CCCS writers drew heavily on the work of the liberal American school that immediately preceded them , but in line with their political preoccupations , inverted the conclusions they drew . Most importantly the CCCS writers saw subcultural involvement as a form of (admirable)

working class resistance , albeit tangentially expressed , to bourgeois hegemony rather than a pathological adaptation to failure .

The third stage in the history of subcultural theory , the present stage , might be labelled in deference to the contemporary intellectual zeitgeist , the 'post - Gramscian' stage . The onslaught of neo-conservatism on the wider society , and post-structuralist and post-modernist theory on the Academy since the beginning of the Eighties has lead to a re-appraisal of the political significance of subcultures and the plausibility of CCCS subcultural theory . During the last fifteen years many theorists have justifiably criticised the work of the CCCS and many CCCS writers themselves have had partial or total apostasies[3] . Yet no school has emerged since the CCCS to provide an alternative paradigmatic theoretical model of subculture and it is obvious that despite its many flaws the work of the CCCS writers still contains many valuable concepts . Subcultural theory of the last fifteen years can be best characterised as post-CCCS . While contemporary theorists are now very wary of infusing the style of subculturalists with grand political symbolism or portraying any and all subcultural activities as insurrectionary acts , contemporary analysts still draw , if cautiously and critically , on the work of the Birmingham School .Though reticent to over emphasise the subversiveness of subcultures, contemporary theorists , like the CCCS writers , are generally sympathetic to subculturalists and interested in how a subculture represents if not a 'resistance' to , then a least a suspicious negotiation with , a society which seeks to marginalise and/or subordinate and/or control the members of certain relatively powerless groups within it .

What little academic analysis been produced on Australian subculture over the last two decades has adopted this 'post - CCCS ' position drawing heavily on the work of writers like Hebdige , Clarke , Hall , Jefferson and Roberts to explain and understand Australian subculture while avoiding the temptation to portray subculturalists as heroic proto- revolutionaries .

4. A Balanced Approach .

The work of the CCCS in the later half of the 1970s can be seen to represent one of the last great moments of Western Marxist theory before the Academy was engulfed and transformed by post-structuralist and post -modernist theory . Ironically during this very period capitalism throughout the Western world began once again to function in the brutal manner classically envisaged by Marx , with advanced societies witnessing the creation of a large reserve army of unemployed , immiseration of the working class and proletarianization of the middle class . Marxist and Marxist influenced theory was not critiqued and developed during this period but rather was largely or completely abandoned by many theorists . At a time when both the working and professional managerial class (PMC)[4] were increasingly subject to unemployment and underemployment and increasingly constrained by and concerned about their economic situation , the economic agent disappeared from Cultural Studies analysis replaced with an all encompassing obsession with gender and sexuality and the prior concern with individuals productive role (or lack thereof) was ignored in favour of enthusiastic

scrutiny of their consumption practices . With the triumph of post-structuralism over Marxism , Cultural Studies has 'progressed ' from an economically deterministic view of culture to the opposite extreme - an appropriately post-modern perspective in which culture is seen as largely autonomous from the economic system (in classic Marxist terms , its base) in which it exists and little or no attention is paid to how material exigencies constraining and constructing those who produce and/or participate in a cultural practice are reflected in that practice .

The CCCS theorists insisted the class system still existed and mattered when other discourses were suggesting a degree of moderate shared affluence and embourgeoisement arising of the post war boom appeared to be transforming Britain into a classless society . Ironically with the end of embourgeoisement , onslaught of proletarianization and attack on the social democratic compromise there has been a puzzling withering away of class in contemporary cultural studies discourse while the wider society has become increasingly inequitable and divided .

Hughes (1993:75) has observed that the Academic Left

would like to endow ordinary internal differences within a society - of gender , race and sexual pattern - with the inflated character of nationhood as though they not only embodied cultural differences but actually constituted whole "cultures" in their own right .

This suitably post-modern enthusiasm for multicultural identities has lead an intellectual environment where -

> *what matters is the politics of culture , not the politics of the distribution of wealth and of real events in the social sphere . . . The academic left is much more interested in race and gender than in class . And it is very much more interested in theorising about gender and race than actually reporting on them . . . the "traditional left " has been left far behind , stuck with all that unglamorous and twice-told stuff about the workers* (Hughes 1993:76) .

Most youth subcultures cannot adequately be explained by theorists with an exclusive interest in issues of gender and sexuality and the politics of culture and an utter disinterest in the politics of the distribution of wealth . This is perhaps the reason subcultures have been largely ignored by cultural studies academics and sociologists over the last fifteen years in the West despite them continuing to play as significant a part , if not more so , in Youth and Popular culture in Western Societies as at any time previously .

The weaknesses in both 1950s/60s liberal American and 1970s progressive British analysis typically occur where the analysts have proceeded from their (respectively liberal or Marxist) theories to the empirical data rather than vice-versa . The liberal American theorists generally portrayed non-conformist youth as pathological

deviants while the Marxists of the Birmingham School typically constructed them as revolutionaries involved (albeit unconsciously) in the noble struggle against bourgeois hegemony . The CCCS writers in particular were guilty of allowing Marxist theory to interfere with providing a sober and balanced account of the nature and significance of subcultures . There is no reason to believe that the post-Marxist theories currently 'hegemonic' within the Academy are not liable to generate an equally prejudiced and partial account of subculture .

By the time Hebdige came to publish <u>Subculture :The Meaning of Style</u> in 1979 the Culturalist concern to tie cultural practice to material conditions - central to earlier CCCS work - was already being de-emphasised . In Cultural Studies since that time it has been largely abandoned . Whatever their other differences , the liberal American school and CCCS writers were convinced the stylistic practices , behaviours , attitudes and lifestyles of subcultural youth were constructed and constrained by the structural location they found themselves in . This view of youth culture as dialectic rather than discourse is one I share . The emphasis on class and to a lesser extent age and ethnicity , rather than the contemporary obsession with gender and sexuality is also something I share with the Birmingham and liberal American schools. However unreconstructed and "unglamorous" a (cautious and sober) Western Marxist approach to subcultures may appear in the present post-modern environment it is still the approach most likely to yield a full and satisfactory analysis .

5 . Thesis Objective .

A wide variety of youth and other subcultures , attracting membership from a wide variety of social groups for a wide variety of reasons have emerged in Australia since the mid 1970s . Any attempt to explore any but a small number of these subcultures is beyond the scope of this thesis . The aim of this thesis is to explore the largely neglected area of what subcultures have emerged amongst Australia's PMC youth since the mid 1970s and why they have taken the form they have . Clarke et al (1976:16) describe their project in <u>Resistance through Rituals</u> as an attempt to reconstruct subcultures in terms of their relation to their parent and the dominant culture and to show how -

subcultures are related to class relations , to the division of labour and to the productive relations of the society , without destroying what is specific to their content and position .

I will attempt to do essentially the same thing in examining the Indie , Gothic , Rave and Feral subcultures . I shall explore how Australia's embattled PMC's class problematic is dealt with by subculturalists ; what , if any , political consciousness subculturalists exhibit as well as the political significance of their actions ; the factors that have lead to the emergence of retreatist apolitical subcultures rather than countercultures amongst PMC youth ; whether or not these subcultures can be seen to be counter-hegemonic ; and the nature of subcultural subjectivities and the significance of style .

The approach and methodology employed in examining subcultures in this thesis are best described as post-CCCS rather than post-structuralist . The post-structuralist approach that presently prevails in most Cultural Studies work takes (like Functionalism) an essentially conservative view of social relations seeing power as a reciprocal relation underemphasising the large inequalities that exist in the distribution of power . As (S) Willis (1993) has noted this approach sees popular and youth culture as a discourse rather than as involved in a dialectic with the capitalist economic system . In examining subcultures it typically isolates out and focuses on one or a small number of style practices examining their significance to feminist or queer politics whilst ignoring the wider issue of how the subcultures practices as a whole are generated as a reaction to the economic system subculturalists find themselves trapped in .

The Post-CCCS approach recognises the validity of many of the criticisms that have been made of Marxist theory in general and CCCS work in particular . It attempts to avoid reductionist simplicitudes and crude economic determinism and it is cautious about overestimating the oppositionality of subcultural practices . Nonetheless it is closer to Marxism than Functionalism or its contemporary equivalent Foucauldianism in recognising the existence of a world in which power and material resources are inequitably distributed and emphasising the importance of the economic agent in determining the lives led and cultural practices engaged in by individuals . It is sensitive to but not overwhelming obsessed by issues revolving around gender and sexuality . The work of Brake (1985) , Grossberg (1992) , Stratton (1992) , (S) Willis (1993) and Sercombe

(1993) are all good examples of this post-CCCS approach . The methodology of this thesis will follow that employed by these post-CCCS writers . It will attempt to trace how the unemployment and underemployment suffered by the non-corporate faction of the professional-managerial class since the collapse of the post-war economic boom , combined with the weakness of the progressive politics which have historically provided a focus for this groups affective investments , has led to some members of this class fraction embracing a subcultural identity .

Given this aim I am uninterested in producing a heavily ethnographic account of the four subcultures studied by reconstructing in minute detail the lives of Ferals , Gothics , Ravers and Indie subculturalists . Such accounts (see Moore's (1994) The Lads in Action for an Australian example of this approach) tend to present a society's subcultures as exotic epiphenomenon which mysteriously appear , operate largely independently of and uninfluenced by the wider society in which exist , then , after a period of time , just as mysteriously disappear . While a degree of ethnographic detail on the subcultures examined , (gathered from hundreds of hours observing , conversing , interviewing and , on occasion , living with subculturalists) , is provided , it is only done so when necessary in articulating the connections between the subculture and the wider 'host' social , economic and political environment it functions within .

ENDNOTES

---

[1] There is some controversy over whether some groups labelled subcultures are in fact non-normative enough to be defined as subcultures in the strict sociological sense of the term . This issue is examined in Chapter Five .

[2] In referring to the Counterculture I am thinking of the movement made up of PMC youth (typically university students) subscribing to a New Left politics , adopting a hippy style and frequently a bohemian lifestyle involving drug use , sexual experimentation , voluntary unemployment etc . Members of a wide range of other groups and organisations joined with the Counterculturalists in certain political campaigns throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s and undoubtedly had a significant effect on its character and development over time . Nonetheless the author believes it is more accurate to classify these organisations as being occasional fellow travellers with rather than inextricable parts of the Counterculture .

[3] See for example Hebdige's (1988) work Hiding in the Light

[4] See Chapter One for a definition of and discussion about the Ehrenreich's (1976) concept of a Professional Managerial Class distinct from a working class below it and ruling class above it .

CHAPTER ONE

The Rise and Fall of Australia's Middle Class

1. The Professional-Managerial Class.

Contrary to Marx and Engel's prediction , the small middle class that existed during the nineteenth century was not proletarianized out of existence as society polarised between the bourgeoisie and proletariat [1]. On the contrary it grew massively in Western societies throughout the twentieth century , particularly during the post war boom period and probably no where more so than Australia (see Broom , Jones and Zubrzycki 1968) . Confronted with this phenomenon of embourgeoisment , Marxist theorists have typically tried to characterise the indeterminate middle class as either part of , or enthusiastic fellow travellers with , the ruling class ; or as part of the proletariat (arguing that all employees who do not own the means of production , regardless of the salary or conditions they enjoy , are part of the working class) . CCCS theorist took the former option describing middle class youth as part of the "dominant culture " and members of the "dominant class" (see Clarke et al 1976) .

Attempting to align the middle class to one of the two acceptable class locations of orthodox Marxist theory is , no matter how elaborate the theoretical contortions performed , untenable , as even many Marxist theorists have come to realise . Several theorists (see Gorz 1982 , Poulantzas (1969) and (1973)) have examined the

paradoxical position of the middle class . One notable analysis in this regard is that of the Ehrenreichs (1976a) and (1976b) . Their analysis is directed to the U.S.A but most of their observations apply equally well to other first world capitalist societies such as Australia . Breaking with Marxist dogma the Ehrenreichs (1976a) posited the existence of a distinct class in between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie - the Professional-Managerial Class (PMC) . The PMC qualifies as a class in its own right , the Ehrenreichs (1976a) argue because its members share a common relation to the means of production and a common "lifestyle , educational background , kinship networks , consumption patterns , work habits , beliefs " (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich 1976a:12) . The PMC is made up of :

salaried mental workers who do not own the means of production and whose major function in the social division of labor may be described broadly as the reproduction of capitalist culture and capitalist class relations . Their role in the process of reproduction may be more or less explicit , as with workers directly concerned with social control or with the production and propagation of ideology (e.g , teachers , social workers , psychologists , entertainers , writers of advertising copy and TV scripts , etc) . Or it may be hidden within the process of production , as is the case with the middle-level administrators and managers , engineers , and other technical workers . . . these occupational groups - cultural workers , managers , engineers and scientists , etc - share a common function in the broad social division of labor and a common relation to the economic foundations of society . (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich 1976a:13-14).

Members of the PMC are differentiated from those of the petit bourgeoisie (artisans ,

shopkeepers , self employed professionals , farmers etc) in that the latter remain outside

the labour-capital polarity neither being employees or to any significant extent employers

while the former is employed by capital to in some form control and manage labour .

This relation of control over the working class leads to an antagonistic

relationship between the two classes despite both classes being in the common position of

having to sell their labour to capital . Interclass relations are characterised by "a complex

mixture of hostility and deference on the part of working-class people , contempt and

paternalism on the part of the PMC" (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich 1976a:18) . However ,

the Ehrenreichs (1976a) argue , the PMC have never simply seen themselves as the

passive agents of capital . Rather they have seen that their role in society and their self

interest lay in preventing class war and mediating class conflict in order to create rational

reproducible social order . The PMC has a class outlook distinctly different to the

capitalist owning class and its 'umpire' role and desire for occupational autonomy brings it

into conflict with capital . Sections of the PMC are liable to develop anti-capitalist

outlooks and , during the first half of the twentieth century , a proportion of the PMC

became attracted to a vision of technocratic socialism in which the 'decadent' , inefficient

and self interested capitalist class would be abolished and the PMC would become the

ruling class rather than just its servants . Until the 1960s PMC individuals were generally

outnumbered in labourist , socialist and communist political organisations by working class

individuals while typically occupying a disproportionately high number of leadership

positions within these organisations . Both the Counterculture and the 'new social movements' that have grown from it in the last two decades have been overwhelmingly , both in terms of leadership and membership , PMC affairs a fact clearly reflected in their preoccupations and objectives . The Ehrenreichs (1976b:10) describe the class consciousness of progressive members of the PMC as being an "ambiguous mixture of elitism and anti-capitalist militance " with PMC political movements characteristically defying " "the system" but often with moralistic contempt for the working class " (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich 1976b:10) .

The PMC can be broadly divided into two fractions which might be labelled the corporate and non-corporate - those intimately involved in and in the direct employ of the corporate sector and those employed in less 'businesslike' environments such as the public service , schools , universities etc . The members of the former group who have been variously labelled the "organisation man " , "the man in the grey flannel suit " and more recently the "Yuppie" tend to enjoy high salaries and enjoy the prospect of significant upward mobility possibly even into the ruling class itself . The corporate fraction has little to gain and potentially much to lose from any change to the status quo and tends towards conservatism . Members of the non-corporate fraction of the PMC while typically enjoying somewhat better working conditions and wages than those who are part of the working class are less well rewarded than their counterparts in the corporate fraction of their class and are relatively fixed in their class location rarely having the prospect of rising into the ruling class . This fraction has less to lose and perhaps

something to gain from a change to the status quo . Sections of the of the non-corporate

fraction of the PMC tend to exhibit a cynical , suspicious and even antagonistic attitude to

capital . Post war progressive political movements have typically drawn the bulk of their

membership from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC . It is members of the non-

corporate fraction of the PMC conservative theorists are referring to when they talk of a

'New Class' of anti-capitalist fifth columnists who putatively dominate the media ,

universities and bureaucracy [2] . Since the mid 1970s youthful members of the non-

corporate fraction of the PMC appear to have become increasingly involved with youth

subcultures rather than the progressive political organisations that have historically

provided a focus for this groups affective investments . Writing of the American situation

in the mid 1970s the Ehrenreichs downplay the division between the conservative

corporate and left-liberal non-corporate fractions of the PMC insisting that despite their

differences both fractions formed a single coherent class and shared a common culture and

lifestyle . As will be discussed below the economic and educational changes of the last two

decades have significantly widened the division between the two fractions of Australia's

PMC . As will be discussed in Chapter Three , this intra-class polarisation is clearly

reflected in the attitudes of both PMC subculturalists and their conventional peers .

The juncture at which young members of the PMC choose which fraction

of the PMC to consign themselves to typically occurs in this country upon the completion

of secondary education . Those aspiring to the corporate fraction typically pursue

vocational qualifications sought after by the private sector while those content to be part

of the non-corporate fraction pursue non-vocational generalist degrees or other qualifications with little value in the labour market .

What distinguishes both fractions of the PMC from those classes above and below it is their precarious position suspended between independent wealth and poverty . Unlike either the ruling or working class individual , the PMC youth cannot simply expect to inherit his or her parents class position . The PMC individual , lacking significant capital resources has to live with the prospect of falling into the powerless and impoverished class beneath him or her . As the Ehrenreichs (1976a:29) put it " The interior life of the class is shaped by the problem of class reproduction . Unlike ruling class occupations , PMC occupations are never directly hereditary " . Writing in a society in which mass higher education had existed for several decades the Ehrenreichs (1976a:29) noted "It is at college young men acquire the credentials for full class membership and young women acquire in addition to their own degrees , credentialled husbands " [3] . The Ehrenreichs (1976a:26) also highlight the importance of the PMCs near monopoly on higher education observing :

claim to possession of specialised knowledge ensures that the PMC can control its own reproduction as a class . . . Lengthy training has barred working class entrance to the professions and given a decided advantage to the children of the PMC itself .

Mass higher education has until recently not existed in Australian society and many members of what the Ehrenreichs (1976a) classify as PMC occupations (e.g journalism) in Australia until recently lacked the tertiary education of their American counterparts . Higher education has become far more common over the last two decades , especially since 1983 , and now plays as important a role in PMC membership in this country as it has historically in the U.S.A . However the increasing level of education undertaken by Australia's PMC has not prevented the class , or at least its non-corporate fraction , facing a declining economic position .

2.Globalisation , Post-Industrialism , Social Democratic Economic Rationalism and the decline of Australia's middle class.

From the time of WWII to the mid 1970s , Australia's middle class grew massively . At its peak in 1976 , after three decades of full employment and continuously rising real wages 65% of all Australian household were part of the middle class (Mackay 1993:138)[4] . Since the mid 1970s , as the extraordinary post war boom stalled , the class's fortunes have declined dramatically . In the sixteen years from 1976 , the middle class lost almost 40% of its membership with 15% of Australian households rising above and 10% falling out of the middle class (Mackay 1993:138) . Many of the households that have managed to remain in the middle class since its downsizing began were able to do so only due to the contribution of a second income . McGregor (1997:160-161,163) , has noted -

a big change in recent years has been the growth of two-income families .
During the eighties decade more than a third of employment growth went to households
which already had one person working . Families with two or more members working
increased by over half a million , or 30 per cent from 1983 to 1989 (Peter Saunders ,
Social Policy Research Centre at University of NSW) . These strategies significantly
buttress middle-class incomes and middle-class identification . . . Between 1983 and
1991 the total number of jobs increased by over 1.5 million , but part-time jobs grew by
50 per cent compared to 20 per cent for full-time jobs . Three-quarters of the new part-
time jobs went to women . The enormous growth in double-income households is largely
due to women going to work .

The image of Australia as an equitable , largely middle class society has ,
over the last two decades , grown increasingly divergent from the reality of an evermore
polarised income distribution . Stilwell (1993) has observed that , in the international
Luxembourg Study examining nine advanced nations , Australia ranks third highest in
terms of the proportion of income possessed by the top 20% of households , third highest
in terms of the proportion of income possessed by the poorest 20% of households and
with the exception of the U.S.A has the lowest proportion of households between the two
extremes of wealth and poverty . Dilnot (1990) using data from the 1986 ABS income
distribution survey has calculated that the top 1% of Australian wealth holders had 19.7%
of total national wealth , the top 10% had 55.2% and the top 20% had 72% . Bradbury ,
Doyle and Whiteford (1989) similarly found that throughout the 1980s those at the top of

the income distribution increased their income share dramatically , those at the bottom made some gains and the income share of those in the middle declined despite the big increase in women's labour force participation amongst middle income couples . King , Rimmer and Rimmer (1991) have found that there has been a persistent polarisation of employee earnings for both males and females , with high and low wage categories rising at the expense of the shrinking middle . Gregory (1992) has found that of the 1 379 000 jobs created between 1976 and 1990 , 983 000 (71%) were in the lowest quintile of wage incomes , 243 000 (18%) were in the highest quintile and only 153 000 (11%) were in the intermediate three quintiles . Gregory (1992) also found that since 1975 the middle three quintiles of male weekly earning distribution has lost more than 400 000 jobs - one job in three . Adjusting for population growth 25% of all full time middle income male jobs disappeared between 1975 and 1990 . Gregory , quoted in McGregor (1997:164) has observed -

Australia has quite clearly moved into a situation where real average wages have not significantly grown for fifteen years (and) part-time employment at low weekly earnings is being substituted for full-time work .

The evaporation of the middle class over the last two decades is a result of the globalisation of the Australian economy , deindustrialisation , the decline of the manufacturing sector , growth of the service sector and since 1983 the neo-classical economic policies implemented by successive Federal governments . Labour market trends

since the mid 1970s have been the reverse of those that were operating in the post war boom and appear to have borne out Braverman's (1974) prediction that technological change would result in employees becoming increasingly deskilled , disempowered and proletarianized . The last two decades have seen a rapid growth of employment opportunities in what is called the secondary or peripheral labour market (which is characterised by insecure employment , low wages and poor conditions , low skill work and no career paths) and the diminution of prospects in the primary or core labour market (which is characterised by reasonably secure employment , high and rising wages and well defined career paths) . The industrial changes of recent decades have generated some high income positions in financial services , communications , information technology and the upper strata of the service sector but most of the employment generated , as is clear from the findings of Gregory and others , has been low wage . Middle income middle management positions and high skill well paid blue collar jobs in primary and secondary industry have been disappearing to be replaced with low skill , low wage pink collar positions as Australia has become the model of a post industrial service economy par excellence .

Between 1981 and 1991 the recreation , personal and other services sector of the Australian economy saw a 50.7% rise in the number of workers employed , finance , property and business services a 48.4% rise , community services a 34.3% rise and the wholesale and retail trade a 22.2% rise . Conversely , long established primary and secondary industries which were once major employers were during this period reducing ,

often dramatically , the number of workers they employed ABS (1994) . The vast majority of jobs created over the last two decades have been modestly paying low skill ones in the service sector and it is these jobs that young people are now disproportionately highly concentrated in . At the time of the 1991 census 28% of all 15-25 year olds were employed in the wholesale and retail trade , 12% were employed in finance , property and business services , 11.5% in community services and 10% in recreational ,personal and other services (see ABS (1994)) .

A quarter of the population over the last two decades has not been earning a wage at all but has become part of the so called welfare class relying on government pensions (frequently unemployment and sole parent benefits) as their principal source of income . Government spending on social security as a percentage of GDP has doubled since the mid 1960s . The proportion of the population dependent on welfare payments as their principal source of income in 1971 was 10% . The major growth in unemployment coupled with changes to family structures saw this figure rise to around 25% by the end of the 1970s . This figure has remained relatively stable ever since staying at around 26% throughout the 1980s and rising to 27.5% in the early 1990s (Mangan 1991) .

The dramatic economic , technological and political changes that have occurred since the mid 1970s have lead to dramatic changes to Australia's class structure . The top 20% - 30% of households with significant capital assets and/or one or two household members in the core labour market have found themselves increasingly well

rewarded as national income has been redistributed upwards . The bottom 25% of households have benefited from successive Labor Governments who were

prepared , unlike their conservative counterparts elsewhere in the Western world , to deviate somewhat from orthodox neo-classical economic policy in remaining willing not only to maintain but actually increase well targeted assistance to the disadvantaged and low income earners . The middle class in contrast has experienced the evaporation of many of the middle income jobs which sustained it and suffered the loss of 40% of its membership .

3.Unemployment in Australia.

Figure One[5]   The Australian Unemployment Rate 1964 - 1994
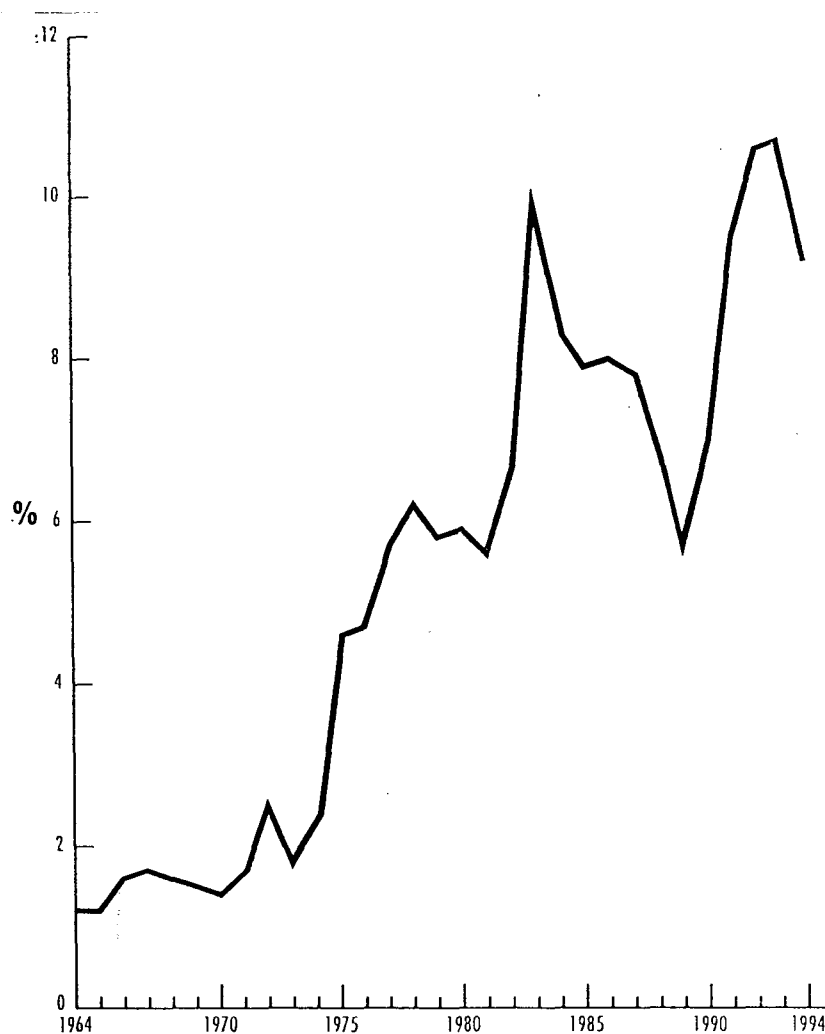
Between 1940 and 1973 Australia enjoyed full employment with the unemployment rate during this period averaging less than 2% .At the end of 1975 Whitlam lost government partly because the increase in the unemployment rate from 2% to 4.9% during his period in office was seen as evidence of gross economic mismanagement . The subsequent Fraser Government was unable to stop the unemployment rate steadily climbing to a high of 10.2% by the time it lost government in 1983 . Unlike its predecessors , the Hawke-Keating government did have some success reversing the trend with unemployment falling slowly from 1983 , and at the conclusion of the positive effects of the mid 1980s boom reaching a low point of 5.9% in October 1989 . The subsequent recession however was to see the unemployment rate rise to a post depression high of over 11% in 1993 . The Keating government with considerable effort and at considerable expense was able to reduce the rate to just under 9% by the time it lost office in 1996 .

The last fifteen years have also seen a phenomenon emerge unknown since the depression - long term unemployment . In 1973 the mean duration of unemployment was 9.3 weeks . By 1985 that figure had almost quintupled to 49.5 weeks . Young people fare slightly better than average when it comes to mean duration of unemployment but not by much . In 1981 the mean duration of unemployment for 15-25 year olds was 29 weeks and in 1986 35 weeks . In 1991 at the conclusion of the positive effects of the mid 1980s boom young people could still expect on average to be unemployed for 33 weeks (ABS 1994) . The deep recession that followed meant the small trend towards declining mean durations of unemployment was dramatically reversed during the early 1990s . While 15-

25 year olds have enjoyed slightly lower mean durations of unemployment than average and significantly lower mean durations than their over 45 counterparts they have still over the last 15 years typically had to endure between 7 and 12 months without work after becoming unemployed (EPAC 1992).

While younger workers have a lower than average incidence of long term unemployment they are two to three times more likely to be subject to the short term variety and youth unemployment rates have ranged between 15% and 30% for the last two decades (EPAC 1992). Care must be taken in reading too much into these figures. Unemployment rates for youth have always been higher than average, reflecting this groups greater tendency to leave their jobs voluntarily and move in and out of employment. Nonetheless it appears that younger workers, always a vulnerable sector of the workforce, have disproportionately borne the burden of the economic reversals of the last 20 years. Had not the massive increase in participation in education, discussed below, taken place youth unemployment would presumably have reached crisis levels by the early to mid 1980s.

Figure 2[6]   Unemployment by Age and Level of Education in 1991
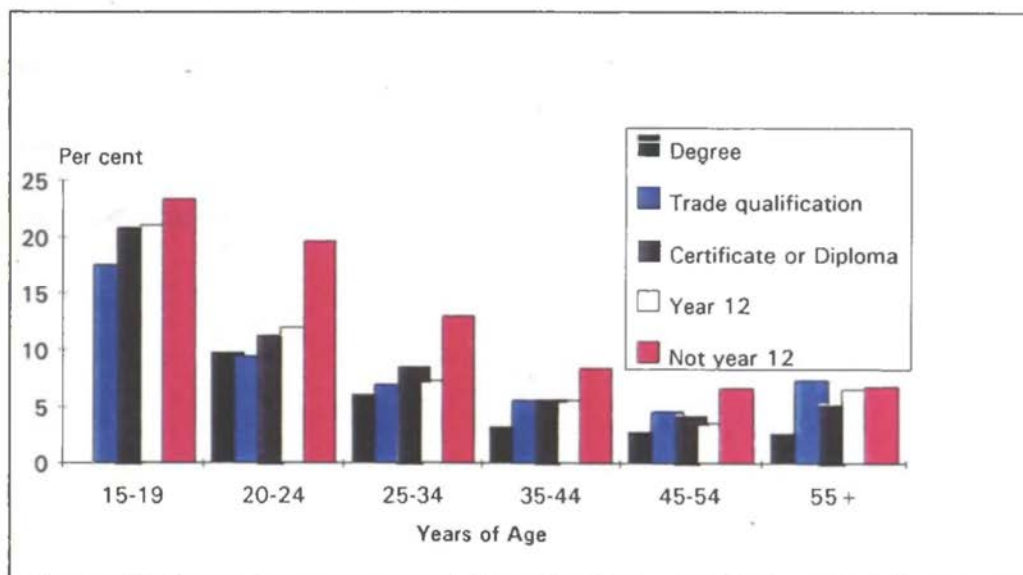
While the poorly educated , as might be expected , have fared worst in the weak labour market , the educated have by no means remained insulated from unemployment . As the above graph illustrates while having no educational qualifications at all certainly increases one's chances of unemployment , possessing a university degree for those under 35 does not significantly increase one's employment prospects - university graduates enjoy only a slightly lower unemployment rate than high school graduates and in fact have a higher unemployment rate than tradespeople in the 20-24 age group . These figures give some indication of what might be called the borgeoisification of unemployment that has taken place since the mid 1970s . For the first time in the history of the Australian labour market a situation exists where demand for tertiary educated workers is not greater than supply ; and unemployment and underemployment has become a concern of the PMC as well as the working class .

4.Higher education in Australia.

While the problem of unemployment has received a significant amount of attention the phenomenon of underemployment has been largely ignored . It is however an even larger problem for the PMC than unemployment . Since the mid 1970s there has been an increasing imbalance between the supply of and demand for tertiary educated workers . The causes of this are twofold - on the demand side (as discussed above) , middle income employment opportunities in the core labour market have been in decline while on the

supply side , successive governments , particularly since 1983 , have enabled and encouraged massive increases in participation in higher education .

Universities began appearing in Australia from 1852 onwards . For the first ninety years of their operation they attracted few students . For instance in its first twenty years Sydney University graduated fewer than 200 students and in 1921 , of all 17-22 year olds , only 1.4% were university students (with this figure remaining stable for the following twenty years) . Up until WWII , growth in the number of students was slow , scarcely keeping pace with population increase . Then however the university system doubled in size between the early 1940s and 1950s and doubled in size again by the early 1960s . From the mid 1950s the university system has been growing at a faster rate than the population of school leavers . Nonetheless for much of the post war boom period , and particularly during the 1940s and 1950s , demand for graduates , especially engineers , doctors , scientists and teachers , significantly outstripped supply to the point where the Federal government and various government departments felt it necessary to create various scholarship and aid schemes to entice individuals into university education (Anderson 1992) .

In 1950 approximately 31 000 students were enrolled in 7 universities and one university college . By 1985 370 000 students were enrolled in 19 universities and 57 institutions of advanced education (Maslen and Slattery 1994) . By 1996 , (following the abolition of the two-tier university - college system) , there were 603 000 students

enrolled in 36 universities (Aitkin 1996) . While Australia's population has only doubled over the last four decades its university student population has increased twentyfold . Most of the growth has taken place in the last two decades . Between 1970 and 1992 year 12 retention rates more than doubled from 29% to 64% while over the same period the number of students enrolled in tertiary education increased by 150% (Dusevic and Harari 1992) . Between 1983-1993 alone there was a 64% increase in university enrolments . In 1971 only 20% of the population had any sort of post-school qualifications . By 1991 that figure had almost doubled to 39% due to the pursuit of qualifications by young people . At the time of the 1991 census 31% of 22 year olds held a post school qualification and a further 23% were attending an educational institution to obtain such a qualification . At the time of the 1991 census 13.5% of those in the 25-44 age group had one or more degrees while only 6% of those above the age of 44 possessed such qualifications (ABS 1994) . Between 1976 and 1991 the number of Australians with degrees almost quadrupled from 3.7% to 14.7% of the population (Maley 1995) .

In the higher education field as in the labour market women have been the gender who have been dramatically increasing their participation rates . In 1973 women made up 37% of the student population . By 1981 women still made up only 41% of the student body but by 1987 for the for the first time in 135 years they made up over 50% of students and by 1993 , 55% . Between 1975 and 1994 female enrolments jumped by 133% compared to 40% for those of men (Maslen and Slattery 1994) . As well as an increase in numbers there has been a broadening of interest in a range of disciplines . While women

are still proportionately overrepresented in Arts courses they are no longer ghettoized there . While 72% of female students were enrolled in Arts courses in 1979 only 50% were by 1994 with women making significant gains towards equality in most subject fields and achieving strong representation in areas they had previously been unrepresented in such as business and science .

Figure 3[7]   Growth in university enrolments in 10 fields of study 1982 - 1992
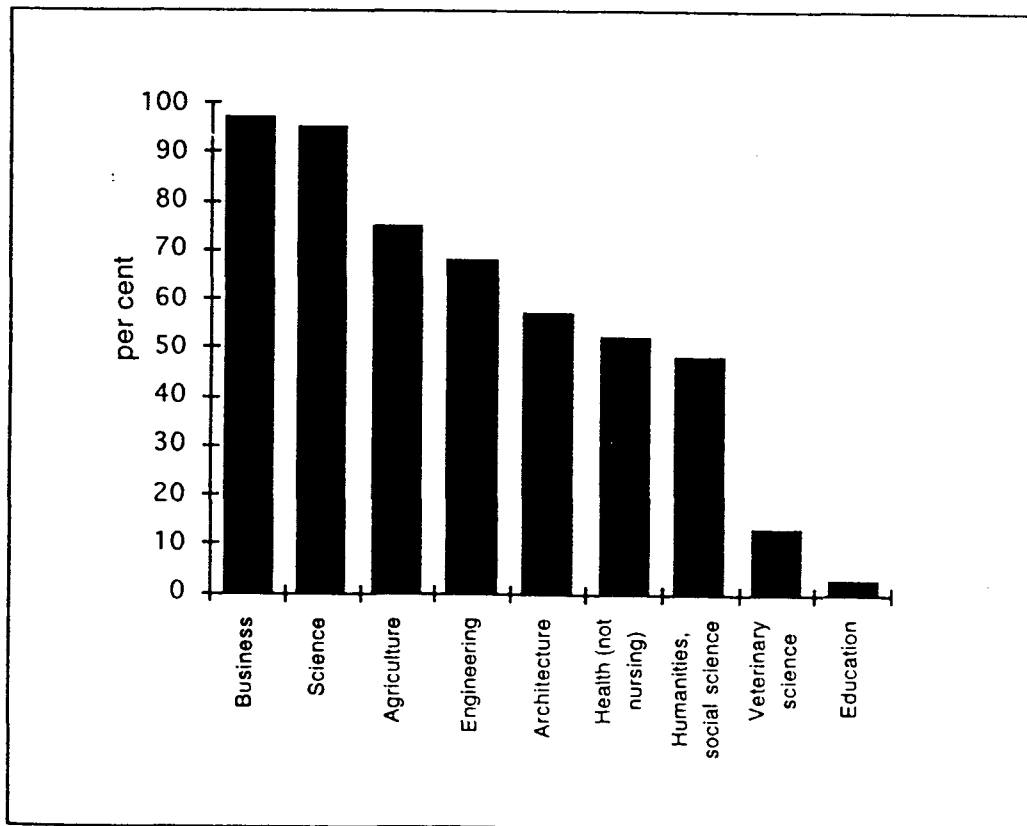
As indicated by the above graph , certain fields of study have benefited more than others during the huge increase in participation in tertiary education in recent times . Both governments and students have become increasingly utilitarian in their academic decision making . Between 1981 and 1990 graduates in business related courses more than doubled . The only category to show a larger increase in numbers was health but that was only due to the training of nurses being transferred from hospitals to universities (Rees 1995) . At the beginning of the 1980s 25% of students were enrolled in the arts with only 18% of students enrolled in business related courses . By 1994 the number of students enrolled in business related courses had risen to 21% while the number enrolled in the arts had fallen slightly to 23% . In 1982 a third of all graduates came from the education faculties of universities and colleges . By 1994 only a quarter of graduates came from these education faculties . While total enrolments in higher education increased by 42% between 1987 and 1992 faculties of arts , humanities and social sciences increased their student numbers by less than 30% . While Arts has managed to retain its long established status as the most popular discipline over the last 15 years students have increasingly sought to study and governments to fund places in vocational courses (Maslen and Slattery 1994) .

5. Credentialism and graduate underemployment.

There have been a number of reasons for the massive increase in participation in tertiary education over the last two decades . An unfulfilled demand for

graduates in the labour market has not been one of them . The dramatic expansion of the tertiary sector that occurred in the immediate post war period was very much the result of a booming economy requiring tertiary educated workers . Though both the 1957 Murray and 1964 Martin reports argued the capacity of higher education should be vastly increased on social justice grounds (i.e to encourage participation from the children of low income families who were at that time even more underrepresented than presently) , the motivation of the government was not solely , or even necessarily , primarily to redistribute life chances . Throughout the post war period , demand for graduate labour exceeded supply and successive governments moves to increase the capacity of and encourage participation in higher education throughout this period was as much a response to the demands of both the private and public sector as an attempt to construct an equitable meritocratic society .

It is likely that by the time of the 1974 Whitlam reforms the supply of graduates , at least from certain faculties was , for the first time in 120 years , beginning to outstrip demand . Certainly from the late 1970s there has been an increasing dislocation between the tertiary education system and labour market resulting in an oversupply of , and diminishing prospects for , graduates - especially those with degrees which carry little prestige in the labour market . While ever increasing numbers of people have been obtaining professional qualifications over the last twenty years , the ratio of professional positions to population has remained constant and as previously observed most of the

employment opportunities that have arisen during this period have been in the secondary labour market . Pace 'clever country' rhetoric , as Gregory (1992) has bluntly observed -

There is no evidence that the economy has been generating demands for an increasing proportion of the population to be well-educated and available for middle-pay jobs . There must be disappointed expectations as those seeking further education are denied rewards they might have expected a generation earlier .

Graduate salaries and employment prospects have been in steady decline since the late 1970s . In 1968-9 the tertiary educated earnt 2.8 times as much as the uneducated .By 1988-9 graduates earnt only 1.8 times as much - a 25% drop (Dusevic and Harari 1992) . In 1978 graduate starting salaries were at 100% of average weekly earnings while by 1993 they had dropped to 80% of average weekly earnings (Ashenden and Milligan 1995) . More significantly , graduate unemployment , once an almost unthinkable phenomenon , has become increasingly common . In 1973 4.5% of graduates were still seeking full time employment at April after graduation . By 1975 the figure had doubled to 9.5% , by 1979 it was 15.2% and by 1983 20.1% . Throughout this period the graduate unemployment rate was always significantly higher and often double that of the general population of 20-24 year olds (Coyte 1985) . Maslen and Slattery (1994) found that only 60% of new graduates were in were in full time employment in 1990 and less than 50% were in 1992 . In 1993 17.9% of graduates were still unemployed 5 months after graduating . In recent years less than half of all recent graduates have been entering the

workforce . Around 25% of graduates now go on to further study , around 5% go overseas and the rest experience unemployment (Ashenden and Milligan 1995) .

It appears that the high levels of graduate unemployment would have been even higher had not many graduates been willing to opt for underemployment and take relatively low skill , low wage jobs alongside of , or instead of the uneducated . For instance in 1994 the most common destination for humanities graduates , accounting for 14% of their overall employment , was clerical work . Other common destinations were modestly renumerated white collar jobs such as teaching (8%) , research work (5%) , library work (4%) and areas in which tertiary education is not a pre-requisite such as sales and finance (10%) and public relations (4%) . Only 4% of humanities graduates became business professionals . Graduates from fields of study such as languages , visual and performing arts and psychology were similarly afflicted with widespread underemployment (Ashenden and Milligan 1995) .

McGregor (1997:163-164) has observed -

Middle-class parents are having to get used to the fact that their kids may not get the same sort of jobs they have , even if their children have university degrees ; graduates find themselves working as kitchen hands and sales staff and in the hospitality industry instead of in professional and management jobs .

While a large scale comprehensive survey into underemployment remains to be undertaken , the various graduate destination surveys presently available indicate it is a widespread phenomenon and recent commentators on higher education (see Coyte 1985 , Maslen and Slattery 1994 , Ashenden and Milligan 1995) have all identified it as a serious and growing problem . Coyte (1985) and Maslen and Slattery (1994) both argue that the massive increase in higher education has unleashed a vicious circle of credentialism . As graduates have flooded a weak job market employers have raised the educational requirements for positions . Graduates displace the non-tertiary educated doing low skill work which once would have been done by the uneducated . Employees have to be more and more educated to undertake less and less complicated tasks . The educated are underemployed in the secondary labour market while the uneducated are crowded out and find it difficult to find any employment at all . Paradoxically as the numbers of graduates increase and the rewards available to them decrease it becomes increasingly important for labour market entrants to have a degree because of the preference of employers for the credentialled . The Keating government appeared to belatedly recognise the dysfunction between the university system and the labour market in 1993 when it announced that the massive expansion of higher education was over and the emphasis would shift into funding places and encouraging participation technical education .

Prospects for graduates in Australia are largely determined by the degree they undertake rather than the institution they attend . Though some universities in Australia are more prestigious than others there is no clearly demarcated elite group (such

as exists for example in Britain , France and the U.S.A) attendance at which , largely regardless of field of study undertaken , guarantees access to employment in the upper echelons of the civil service and corporate sector . In Australia the specific degree remains of primary importance . Those pursuing fields of study at the top of what might be termed the degree hierarchy (Law , Medicine , Dentistry , Economics , Business , Architecture etc) have , despite the economic and educational changes of the last two decades , remained relatively assured of well renumerated attractive employment in the core labour market or as self employed professionals . It is those at the bottom of the degree hierarchy - most humanities graduates and those studying the physical and biological sciences - who have experienced unemployment and underemployment ; and it has been their poor performance in the labour market that has been responsible for figures showing a deterioration in the overall level of graduate salaries and employment .

The prospects for those at the bottom of the degree hierarchy have never been as attractive as for those at the top but when the overall supply of graduates was much lower and the labour market differently structured those at the bottom still enjoyed the prospect of reasonably attractive employment in the core labour market - generally in the public sector and most frequently in teaching . In the mid 1970s over a third of all graduates and almost half of all humanities graduates went into teaching positions (Coyte 1985) . While a significant proportion of humanities graduates and others at the bottom of the degree hierarchy still manage to obtain middle income positions in teaching and elsewhere in the public service , a sizeable proportion now find themselves trapped in the

lower levels of the public service (typically in clerical work) or in the secondary labour

market employed alongside of, òr instead of the uneducated in secondary labour market

(frequently in pink-collar service sector occupations) . Exacerbating the problems of this

group , the public sector - the traditional employer of graduates from the lower end of the

degree hierarchy has been progressively scaled back in recent years in line with orthodox

neo-classical economic policy - between 1981-1991 the employment share of the public

sector declined from 26% to 23.7% of the workforce (ABS 1994) .

6.The erosion of Anglo-Celtic advantage.

In a multicultural society such as Australia , the role of ethnicity must be

accorded as much attention as that of class and the interconnections between the two

noted . Anglo-Celts , including those in the proletariat , have until recently constituted a

privileged group within Australian society . Over the last two to three decades however

their hegemony has come under increasing challenge from a large number of non-Anglo-

Celtic immigrants and their offspring who have arrived in Australia since 1945 . 5.7 million

immigrants came to Australia between 1945-1988 and 3.7 million settled permanently

(Inglis et al 1992:62) . Most , though not all , of these non-Anglo-Celtic immigrants ,

both during the immediate post war largely European phase and the more recent , post

White Australia policy largely Asian phase have entered Australian society in the lower

echelons of the class structure but have frequently achieved significant upward mobility

over a relatively short time period .

During the post war period , Northern European and British immigrants coming from mature industrial economies and possessing in demand industrial skills were able to obtain upper working or middle class jobs upon arrival and assimilated quickly into Australian society . Southern European migrants in contrast became a sub-proletariat doing the most poorly paid , dangerous and low status work. Sherington (1990:146) has commented "Immigrants from Southern Europe have formed the backbone of the post-war Australian blue collar workforce " while Markus (1994:197) has observed that

There is strong evidence that the labour market was segmented along ethnic lines in the post war period , a development that has been highlighted by researchers since the early 1960s . At the 1971 census , for example , Southern Europeans were much more likely to be employed as tradespeople , process workers , and labourers than the Australian born .

The skills and hence prospects of the more recent Asian migrants show a similar regional dichotomy to their European predecessors . Immigrants from Hong Kong and ASEAN nations (like their Northern European predecessors) come from advanced nations , a significant proportion also possess English language skills and significant educational qualifications and these immigrants are generally able to secure attractive employment or , in the case of business migrants start their own businesses with the large amount of capital they bring with them from their previous country of residence . Those

from Indochina (like their Southern European predecessors) come from under-developed (and wartorn) nations and typically possess little formal education (or if educated are unable to get their qualifications recognised) ; have few marketable skills ; have poor or non-existent English language skills and generally become members of the subproletariat of Australian society . Sherington (1990:165) has written of the Indochinese refugees -

with little understanding of English and most of their overseas qualifications not recognised , many initially ended up on the assembly lines of Australian factories . In 1981 , 70% of the Vietnamese employed in Australia were concentrated in process work or were tradesmen or labourers .

Coughlan (1992:101) drawing on 1986 census data has similarly observed "the majority of the Indochinese-born workers are to be found in the blue collar occupations . . . working as tradespersons , plant and machine operators and labourers " .

Migrants in Australia have not had significant obstacles placed in their way to prevent them attaining full citizenship and access to middle and high income occupations . Many of the Southern European and Indochinese migrants who entered Australia on the lowest rung of the class ladder have managed to move into the middle class relatively rapidly - typically by starting small businesses . Even those migrants who have themselves remained trapped at the bottom of the class structure have seen their

offspring achieve upward mobility frequently , especially in the case of Asian migrants , through educational attainments . Markus (1994:214,215) has observed

Although ethnic segmentation developed , there was little evidence of the formation of an underclass in the first four decades after the war ; immigrants generally did not experience the same degree of closure as 'guest workers' did in some European countries . . . most found in Australia a relatively open society which offered the prospect of economic advancement to many and the opportunity of citizenship , permanent settlement , and formal political rights to all but a small minority .

By the late 1960s a significant proportion of postwar migrants had achieved upward mobility and it was possible to speak of a rising 'ethnic' middle class sure of its place in Australian society and beginning to become involved in the political process in order to remove any barriers still in existence blocking their further advancement . Markus (1994) argues that the Fraser government's championing of Multiculturalism in the mid 1970s was an attempt to placate and incorporate the by then large ethnic middle class . First and second generation European migrants having achieved a secure material base were also in a position to be able to encourage their children to proceed to tertiary education . Since the time of the 1974 Whitlam reforms the overwhelming domination of Anglo-Celts of the professions and upper echelons of the public and corporate spheres has been diminishing as the children and grandchildren of post-war European migrants have in significant numbers entered the tertiary education and proceeded to high status

employment . Castles et al (1988:35-36) have observed that the educational and occupational mobility of migrant children " is significant and means that the labour market function of the first generation will not be altogether inherited by the second generation " . Markus (1994:200) found that 11.6% of second generation Greek-Australians were in professional and technical occupations compared to 1.5% of the first generation while the figures for Italians were 10% for the second generation compared to 3.4% for the first generation and for Yugoslavs 13.2% for the second generation compared to 3.2% for the first .

The real challenge to Anglo-Celtic domination of tertiary education over the last two decades however has not come from the long established children and grandchildren of the postwar migrants but first and second generation Asian migrants who have been arriving in large numbers since 1974 . It appears Asian -Australians , regardless of what class location they occupied in their country of origin or what class location they occupy in Australian society , place an extremely high value on higher education . Whereas there was a time lapse of at least a generation between post war European migrant groups arriving and entering the tertiary education system in significant numbers Asian migrant groups had an almost immediate impact with many of the children of these migrants undertaking higher education . At the time of the 1986 census for example , more than half of the Asian born population of 15-24 year olds were attending educational institutions compared to around a third of the general population and 16.8% of Asian born 15-24 year olds were full time university students compared to 8.4% of Australian born

15-24 year olds (Inglis et al 1992:84) . Care must be taken with the figure of 16.8% as it includes a large number of Asian overseas students studying in Australia as well as Asian-Australians but nonetheless this , and other available evidence points to high levels of participation in higher education by Asian-Australians .

A 1991 DEET survey found several Asian migrant groups were overrepresented in the student population - students born in Malaysia , Brunei , Hong Kong and Macau were present in greater numbers than proportion in the general population would suggest . Other available data (see the annual DEET analysis of the tertiary student population entitled Selected Higher Education Statistics) show high levels of participation in tertiary education by individuals born in China , Hong Kong , India , South Korea , Malaysia , Singapore , Shri Lanka , Taiwan and Vietnam over the last two decades . In 1994 for instance 8% of the University student population (not including overseas students) had been born in Asia or the Middle East and just under 15% of students came from homes in which a language other than English was spoken . Those speaking Asian languages in particular Cantonese , Mandarin , Hindi , Korean , Tamil and Vietnamese , made up a large proportion of this 15% (DEET 1995) . Coughlan (1992:85) has observed that Vietnamese students are overrepresented in courses such as medicine , engineering and computing at the top of the degree hierarchy and underrepresented in courses at the bottom of the degree hierarchy such as education , psychology , sociology and social work . It seems reasonable to assume the same holds true for other Asian groups . The reasons for this overrepresentation at the top of the degree hierarchy appear

to be twofold . Firstly Asian-Australian students appear to be more highly dedicated than members of any other ethnic group and achieve in disproportionately high numbers the matriculation results necessary to access high demand courses at the top of the degree hierarchy . Secondly there appears to be , to a greater extent than exists amongst other ethnic groups , significant parental pressure upon students to undertake and succeed in prestigious course which will lead to high status employment . It is also possible first and second generation Asian-Australians feel they lack the advanced English language skills and cultural capital necessary to successfully undertake Arts courses .

One of the successes of Australian multiculturalism has been that although the majority of the millions of migrants who have settled here since 1945 have had to endure membership of the proletariat or subproletariat for some period of time many achieved upward mobility and , even if they themselves didn't , many of their children did . Had the extraordinary economic conditions and general upward mobility of the post war period continued past the mid 1970s the arrival of large numbers of ethnic Australians into the middle and upper class may not have lead to any diminution in the affluence and life chances of the privileged Anglo-Celtic majority . As it was at the very time ethnic Australians were emerging into the middle class the middle class was itself shrinking . Once the economy and middle class stopped booming in the mid 1970s gains by one group inevitably came at the expense of another . While the number of high income positions has remained static and middle income ones have been disappearing , Anglo-Celts who once enjoyed a monopoly on such positions have increasingly found themselves losing out in the

competition for such positions to ethnic Australians . During a period when a university education was becoming increasingly essential to gain access to middle and high income positions second and third generation European-Australians and first and second generation Asian-Australians began entering the university system in large numbers with the latter group gaining a disproportionately large number of places in high demand degree course . This ethnic influx transformed what until the early 1970s had been an almost exclusively Anglo-Celtic preserve and reduced the number of places available for Anglo-Celts . While Anglo-Celts still enjoy a dominant position in Australian society that domination has been progressively reduced since at least the mid 1960s . This diminution in Anglo-Celtic dominance and the visible affluence and increasing political assertiveness of ethnic groups coupled with the economic reversals of the last two decades has lead to the emergence of anti-immigration , anti-immigrant and anti -multiculturalism sentiments amongst many older and/or working class Anglo-Celtic Australians [8] . The response of PMC Anglo-Celts or at least PMC Anglo-Celtic youth to the constriction of their lifechances has been more subtle and less reactionary more frequently taking the form of subcultural involvement than support for right-wing populists [9].

8.Class Problematic.

The ' class problematic' of the Australian middle class individual since the mid 1970s has been the age old one of the middle class - maintenance of ones relatively privileged position and avoidance of slipping back into the proletariat one , or ones

forbears emerged from . From 1940 until the mid 1970s mobility in Australian society was largely one way - upward . Since that time the position of the middle class has become more precarious . 10% of Australian households have fallen out the middle class altogether and many of the Australian households who remain in the middle class have been able to do so only by coming to rely on two wages one or both of which are capable of rapidly disappearing in a now volatile and insecure economic environment . Youth has been emerging into a weak labour market in which most of the employment opportunities on offer have been modestly paying ones in the service sector . The middle class , once almost as large as the class above it and below it put together and doubled , is losing members at an astonishing rate . The situation of Australia's middle class since 1975 strangely mirrors that of London's East End working class a quarter of a century ago as described by Cohen (1972:17) in his seminal study on working class subculture with the community "caught and pulled apart " into distinct class fractions - those in "highly specialised , skilled and well paid jobs " and those in "routine , dead end , low paid unskilled jobs associated with the labour intensive sections especially the service industries " .

Up until the latter half of the 1970s a fairly clear connection existed between an Australian citizens educational achievements and likely future class position - if an individual had a complete secondary education or better they were relatively assured of a middle class lifestyle . Of course even without these qualifications such a lifestyle was easily attainable for most but possession of such qualifications was , (accurately enough) ,

seen as a firm guarantee of middle class status or better . The creation of a post-industrial service economy and the evaporation of middle income jobs over the last two decades coupled with massive increases in participation in higher education have significantly altered the previously simple equation between education and status . Much sociological analysis has divided the population into three broad groups - the uneducated and unskilled , skilled workers and the educated and assumed all members of the latter group enjoy easy access to a middle class lifestyle . This is , as discussed above , no longer the case .

In 1980 Gorz identified a "non-class" which he described as the "neo-proletariat" emerging in advanced Western nations as a result of the emergence of a highly automated , high technology , post-industrial economy . Gorz (1982:69-70) observed -

The majority of the population now belongs to the post industrial neo-proletariat which , with no job security or definite class identity , fills the area of probationary , contracted , casual and temporary employment . . . The neo-proletariat is generally over qualified for the jobs it finds . It is generally condemned to underuse of its capacities when it is in work and unemployment itself in the longer term . Any employment seems to be accidental and provisional , every type of work purely contingent . It cannot feel any involvement wit 'its' work or identification with 'its' job . Work no longer signifies an activity or even a major occupation ; it is merely a blank interval on the margins of life , to be endured in order to earn a little money .

Though the situation is not quite as extreme or simple as Gorz suggests his theory would seem to apply relatively well to the experiences of many Australian youth , especially those from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC , since the mid 1970s .

Those at the top of the degree hierarchy destined to become members of the corporate fraction of the PMC are still relatively assured of entry into the core labour market and a middle class lifestyle or better . However those from the middle to the bottom of the degree hierarchy now face grimmer prospects . It is such individuals who are most keenly aware of the class problematic of their parent culture - inability to maintain a middle class lifestyle . Interestingly it is largely from the ranks of this group rather than members of the corporate fraction of the PMC that youth subcultures that PMC subcultures draw their membership .

8.Epigoni.

My generation was brought up being promised so much . Advertising promised so much . The lucky country promised so much . We reached adulthood and found it wasn't there ..

Richard King - winner of the 1995 Vogel literary award [10]

PMC youth coming of age since the mid 1970s have frequently found their life situation strangely contradictory to both their own expectations and those of the wider society . Australia is still constructed as , if not quite the 'Lucky Country' of yesteryear then at least still the ' Relatively Lucky Country ' - certainly a country in which a middle class lifestyle is still the norm and easily achievable . Unemployment and underemployment are still generally believed to be working class problems . The ' Clever Country ' is supposed to richly reward its well educated citizens with attractive positions in the core labour market . The startling contraction of the middle class has not featured prominently in any of the dominant discourses of Australian society which still construct this society as one of shared prosperity in which a middle class lifestyle is easily accessible , especially to the credentialled . Failure to achieve such a lifestyle especially for an educated individual in a society ideologically constructed as a prosperous , equitable liberal social democracy could only be conceived as the result of some personal shortcoming .

The sense of relative deprivation and status inconsistency is likely to be particularly acute for Anglo-Celtic youth from families long established in Australia . While their grandparents and parents , generally with minimal education , were able to easily achieve a middle class standard of living during the post war boom period , they , even with the benefit of a far longer education , are unable to access such a lifestyle . By contrast ethnic youth , even if they themselves raised in middle class circumstances are likely to have parents or grandparents who were some period of time members of the proletariat or subproletariat . The Anglo-Celtic youth expects to enjoy the same easily

won prosperity previous generations experienced . The experiences of the ethnic youth and his or her family mean he or she views a middle class lifestyle as contingent rather than normative .These different worldviews may be one of the reasons ethnic youth have , compared to their Anglo-Celtic counterparts , shown relatively little interest in the PMC subcultures .

Subcultures , which have for decades allowed working class youth the opportunity to forge an identity alternative and unconnected to the one ascribed them by their place in the productive system , have come over the last two decades , on a scale never before seen in Australia , to perform a similar function for PMC youth , especially Anglo-Celtic ones , who like their class as whole are often finding the employment , lifestyle and status they expect difficult or impossible to attain .

ENDNOTES

.

---

[1] "Our epoch , the epoch of the bourgeoisie possesses . . . this distinctive feature : it has simplified the class antagonisms . Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps , into two great classes facing each other - bourgeoisie and proletariat " from Marx , K and Engels , F (1848) <u>Manifesto of the Communist Party</u>

[2] McGuinness , P (26/4/97) in "The truth about the rise of the New Class " in the <u>Sydney Morning Herald</u> writes

It is accurate and useful to describe the social and political structure of Australia as being dominated by a "New Class" which is roughly identified with the educated white-collar middle class and professionals who constitute the political elite of our society . . . any regime tends to come under the control of the educated political elites who govern in their own interest . . . Over the past 20 years Australia has been producing its own nomenklatura of bureaucrats , arts administrators , media gurus , official artists and writers , and so on . . . The New Class hates business , unless properly regulated by its members , it detests the market and any mechanism like pricing which exposes to the vulgar gaze the reality of who gets what in our society .

[3] Of course even at the time the Ehrenreichs (1976a) were writing women had the option of attaining full membership of the PMC by pursuing their own careers rather than simply being reliant on " acquiring " a PMC marriage partner .

[4] Mackay classifies households as middle class if they have an income between $22 000 and $72 000 (in constant 1991-92 terms)

[5] Graph taken from Whitfield , K and Ross , R (1996) The Australian Labour Market Harper Educational

[6] Graph taken from EPAC (June 1992) Unemployment in Australia (Council Paper No.51)

[7] Graph taken from Ashenden , D and Milligan , S (1995) The Australian Good Universities Guide to Getting In , Getting On , Getting a Job Reed Reference

[8] Such sentiments have been exacerbated by tabloid media reporting (which ranges from the sensational to the outright hysterical) of various subcultures and gangs made up of (working class) ethnic youth . Vietnamese youth gangs in Cabramatta involved in the drug trade have been portrayed as members of triads with the suggestion they are part of a sinister highly organised multinational Asian criminal cartel . The ' homeboy ' subculture which appeals primarily to working class ethnic youth and which revolves an antipodean aping of the culture of urban African-American underclass youth (i.e listening to and

performing hip hop music , breakdancing , graffiting , wearing sportswear in particular baseball caps , the use of ebonic slang) has also periodically been subjected to moral panics . Unfortunately I do not have the space within my particular focus to undertake examination of any of the various outer-suburban working class ethnic subcultures presently in existence . Se Maxwell and Bambrick (1994) , Forrester (1993) and Foote (1993) for examinations of these type of subcultures .

[9] The author is unaware of any serious academic research presently in existence on the Hanson phenomenon . However at the time of writing and on the evidence available it appears that reactions to multiculturalism amongst Anglo-Celtic Australians broadly divide along generational and class lines . It appears the anti-immigration/anti-multiculturalism agenda appeals most to those now over 40 who came of age in a largely monocultural society and are disturbed by the changes wrought to Australian society by large waves of migrants and successive governments championing of multiculturalism over the last two decades . It also appears that poorly educated working class individuals , who have fared worst from the negative economic changes of the last two decades and who are seeking a simple reason for and solution to their predicament ; and who lack the education and cultural capital that frequently instils an appreciation or at least tolerance of other cultures , are similarly attracted to such an agenda . Both the seats of Oxley and Kalgoorlie now held by the anti-immigration and anti-multiculturalism Independents Pauline Hanson and Graeme Campbell were previously safe ALP seats containing large working class constituencies . Conversely most of the support for multiculturalism and (visible)

opposition to Pauline Hanson appears to have come from PMC youth -notably political

groups largely made up of university students .

[10] Quoted in Davis (1997:140)

CHAPTER TWO

Epigoni in interregnum

1. Class Consciousness and political attitudes in Australia.

The class consciousness of Australians has been examined by a wide variety of sociologists and political scientists in the post war period (see Broom , Jones and Zubrzycki 1968 , Broom and Jones 1976 , Aitkin 1977 and 1982 , Connell 1977 , Chamberlain 1983 , Baxter et al 1991) . None has found that Australians exhibit a significant degree of class consciousness or perceive themselves to be members of an unjust class society .

Connell (1977) has observed that Australians' conceptions of class pass through three stages as they mature . Between the ages of 12 and 16 , (the period when most adolescents become involved in youth culture and some begin to become interested and involved in subcultures) , the third and final stage - the stage of true class schemes - is reached . Adolescents come to recognise the major classes in society and their distinctive attributes . They are aware of the social inequalities that exist but do not believe , as they generally do at an early stage , that these inequalities are unjust . Adolescents upon reaching the final stage of class schemes come to believe , like their elders , that the existing class structure is a just one and one's position within it is proportional to one's

efforts . The "disengaged consensus " (Connell 1977:146) of those adolescents Connell

surveyed was that society was satisfactory and did not require a reordering to remove or

ameliorate inequities . Connell comments " Most . . do not see class as a problematic

issue or feel themselves to be engaged in any type of class conflict " (Connell 1977:146) .

Connell (1977:150) comments of the adolescents he surveyed that :

very few indeed , have a firm consciousness of their own class position . . .

Class is not salient as a frame of reference for judging the self   . . . They do not have

that shared consciousness of class membership which is basic to class politics . . . their

political attitudes . . . are with a few exceptions entirely free of class considerations . . .

The most striking finding , overall , is that the children develop a detailed interpretation

of class without a firm consciousness of class membership .

Aitken (1977) found similarly low levels of class consciousness amongst

those Australians he surveyed between 1967 to 1969 . Asked to rate important sources of

identity class finished last of the five choices offered to respondents behind "Australian" ,

" British Subject" , "State" and "Town" . This and other data lead Aitken (1977:127 ,129)

to conclude -

we are entitled to a strong suspicion class labels are worn lightly by many Australians . . . although most people will readily place themselves into a social class , for perhaps two-thirds of them class labels carry little meaning or permanence .

It might be assumed that the economic reversals of the last two decades and dramatic changes in the class structure would have lead to an increase in class consciousness amongst Australians in the period since Connell and Aitken carried out their surveys . No such phenomenon has taken place . The most recent and exhaustive analysis of class in Australia carried out by Baxter et al (1991) found , as Connell and Aitkin earlier had , that class carried little salience for Australians . Baxter et al found Australians were class aware but not class conscious - that is they were aware of class differences in society and understood the workings of class mechanisms but didn't attach much significance to these things . Only 46.8% of those they surveyed were prepared to say they belonged to a particular social class . When the interviewers insisted respondents place themselves in a class location 3.6% still refused to do so insisting classes didn't exist . 29% of male and 42% of female respondents working in low skill , low pay occupations still classified themselves as middle class .

When presented with three possible models of the class structure of Australian society and asked to choose which provided the most accurate representation 42% of respondents in Baxter et al's survey chose a money model which presented the

class structure as based on income and wealth , slightly less than 30% chose a status

model which presented the class structure as based on a hierarchy of occupational prestige

and slightly under 30% chose the power or dichotomous class model (i.e "Australian

society is composed of employers and big business owners and workers and those who

have to depend on a wage for a living ") which came closest to representing a class

conscious image of society (Baxter et al:268) . When respondents were asked to rank

sources of identity that were important to them social class finished tenth behind 'Family

Group member ' , 'Australian' , 'Occupation' , 'Gender' , 'State' , 'Ethnic background' ,

'Town/District' , 'Age' and 'Religion' . Baxter et al (1991:274-275) comment on their

findings -

the picture that emerges is of a society whose inhabitants appear

relatively indifferent to matters of class . . . A majority of Australians quite simply do not

think of themselves or their lives in class terms , and this indifference to class appears

borne out of a perception not simply that the class structure is relatively fluid and open ,

but also that class has no great cultural significance as a basis for social division . . .

Australia cannot be considered a 'classless ' society in an objective sense . . . However ,

our results appear to endorse one - albeit contested - component of Australian folklore :

that class remains a relatively unimportant cultural category for most Australians

Along with low levels of class consciousness Australians exhibit low levels of interest in politics. In a survey carried out by Aitkin [1] in 1967 - at a time of momentous social change of the sort which would seem to encourage an interest in politics amongst citizens - nearly half of Aitkin's sample declared they had no or not much interest in politics ; more than half did not follow political news ; two thirds did not know the name of their federal member of parliament ; two out of five did not care very much which party won elections ; and barely half thought what the federal Government did made any difference to their well-being . Only 4% of those in the sample were members of a political party and of those only one in three considered themselves to be active party workers . Aitkin (1977:18, 23) comments -

Survey data certainly support the view that politics is of small moment to most of the electorate . . . the every day participants , the politicians , advisers , party workers , trade union leaders and others in similar positions who really understand politics are only a tiny handful of the citizens .

Subsequent studies have found similar ignorance and apathy amongst the electorate as well as widespread acceptance of the status quo in terms of Australia being a capitalist democracy .

As referred to above. Connell (1977) found the overwhelming majority of individuals he surveyed , including working class ones , had by the time they reached adolescence , come to accept that Australia's economic system was ,despite its inequitable outcomes , fair . Chamberlain (1983: 45-51) similarly found that a majority of respondents in all the class samples , he undertook , including the working class ones , endorsed the system of private enterprise . More recently Baxter et al (1991:225) found high levels of 'pro-capitalist' as opposed to 'pro-worker' attitudes amongst those they surveyed - results which at face value seemed to suggest -

Australia is the repository of an 'enterprise culture' of truly Thatcherite proportions , with virtually all trace of socialist thinking eradicated from its upper strata and only minimal support for such strategies evident within the lower echelons of the class structure .

The respondents in Baxter et al's survey also expressed little interest in political activity . When asked what they would do if concerned about a social or political issue 88% said they would not write to the newspapers , 86% said they would not join a campaign or organisation concerned with the issue , 81% said they would not demonstrate or march or actively promote the issue they were interested in , 60% said they would not attend public meetings and 77% said they would not contact their Member of Parliament . The only

form of political activity generating widespread participation was petition signing with 70% of respondents reporting having engaged in this activity .

Data collected National Social Science Survey conducted in 1984-85 and published in Kelley and Bean (1988:47) presents a similar picture of a conservative electorate . When asked to place themselves on the political spectrum , respondents showed an overwhelming preference for centrism and demonstrated a greater aversion for the left than the right . 55% of respondents said the were in the centre of the political spectrum . 22% reported they were somewhat to the right and 9% strongly to the right . In contrast only 3% of respondents claimed they were strongly to the left and only 12% described themselves as somewhat to the left . 21% of respondents reported little interest in politics , 47% reported some interest in politics and only 32% reported having a good deal of interest in what is going on in politics . 9% of respondents reported they were very satisfied with the operation of democracy in Australia and 64% said they were fairly satisfied . Only 4% reported they were not at all satisfied with a further 19% reporting they were not very satisfied . These figures lead Bean (1988) to conclude " the mass electorate in Australia , as in many other countries , is not highly politicised in the sense of being psychologically involved in politics " Kelley and Bean (1988 :49) .

A significant body of evidence points to Australians exhibiting very low levels of class consciousness , being very accepting of the status quo , taking a broadly centrist position , having a greater aversion to radicalism than conservatism and showing little interest in politics or political activism . However one group of Australians has typically demonstrated the exact opposite of these national traits . Members of the PMC have always , as one might expect given their background and education , demonstrated an above average interest and participation in politics (See Aitken 1977 , Kelley and Bean 1988 , Western et al 1991 , McGregor 1997) . Youth from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC would seem to be the group within the PMC which has historically demonstrated the most interest and willingness to participate in progressive politics . Over the last 100 years this group has frequently , in stark contrast to the mass electorate , exhibited a high level of class consciousness in the sense of perceiving the class system to be unjust (though not necessarily in the sense of identifying as part of the working class themselves) , been highly critical of the status quo , taken a radical rather than centrist position and have become involved in various forms of political activism . The apparent political passivity of contemporary youth from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC may be unremarkable in the general Australian context but it appears aberrant when it is compared to the political engagement demonstrated by significant numbers of youth from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC throughout Australia's history particularly in decades such as the 1890s , 1930s, 1940s and most recently from the mid 1960s to mid 1970s .

2.Counterculture in Australia. .

The non-appearance of a movement similar to the Counterculture over the last two decades and the apparent quietism of those who have come of age since the mid 1970s has dominated discussion on Youth and Youth culture over the last 15 years (see for example Hebdige 1988 , Reynolds 1988 , Redhead 1990) . Before attempting to explain the disengaged nature of many contemporary PMC subculturalists , it is necessary to briefly examine their much mythologised antecedents . Non-conformist middle class youth groups have typically been categorised as either bohemian or radical - with the latter being interested in activism to bring about social change and the former in self imposed exile from and uninterested in transforming their host society . Such a categorisation has been and is simplistic and problematic given that many members of groups categorised as bohemian have been interested in and sympathetic to radical ideas while many members of groups categorised as radical have led bohemian lifestyles . Nonetheless while radical and bohemian worldviews and philosophies typically co-exist within non-conformist middle class groups , one or the other is generally dominant . The vast majority of contemporary PMC subculturalists exhibit a bohemian rather than radical worldview which is surprising given that historically most of the groups joined by non-conformist PMC youth in Australia have been more radical than bohemian and Australian society , unlike some others , does not have a long history of generating bohemian youth subcultures .

There were no real Australian equivalents to the various bohemian groups that European societies generated such as the Bohemians of 1830s Paris , the Fin-de-Siecle Aesthetes of Victorian England and their European counterparts the decadents and the German *Wandervogel* of the 1900s . Nor were there any Australian equivalents to groups such as the Dadaists and Surrealists in Europe and 'flappers' and 'jellybeans' in the U.S.A created by the 'Lost Generation' in the interwar period earlier this century . Up until the mid 1850's it appears Australian society was bereft of bohemian groups of any type . Once a professional intelligentsia emerged from the middle of the nineteenth century , small circles of hedonistic professional artists opposed to the reigning Victorian values did begin to emerge . These groups as White (1981) has observed were elitist and exclusionary with their membership typically restricted to a small coterie of aspirant and/or professional artists and various 'hangers-on' . Even these bohemian artists (especially the writers) , were in Australia , far more engagé than their more apolitical European counterparts , frequently proselytising nationalist , republican and socialist ideas . It appears that for the first half of the twentieth century small circles of artists remained the only notable bohemian groups in Australian society . From the 1870s to the 1940s it was various socialist and communist groups with their accompanying youth wings , art associations and writers leagues rather than bohemian subcultures which typically served as a focus for the affective investments of disaffected PMC youth in Australia[2] . The Sydney Push which emerged in the late 1940s appears to be the first bohemian movement

to attract a numerically significant and occupationally diverse membership . Like their fin-

de-siecle predecessors these 1950s Australian bohemians were more politically aware

than their foreign counterparts the European Existentialists and American Beats . Though

not believing in the possibility of the creation of a socialist utopia libertarian Push

members generally subscribed to a progressive set of values (see Coombs 1996) .

Australia's Counterculture differs in several important respects to its

foreign , especially American , counterparts and these differences must be noted before

attempting to explain the current dearth of Australian countercultural youth groupings .

Foremost amongst the distinguishing aspects of the Australian Counterculture was its

small membership . As elsewhere the Australian Counterculture was made up of a fraction

of the student population . More specifically a sizeable minority of those studying the

Humanities and destined for employment in non-corporate PMC occupations . The

proportion of the Australian population in tertiary education was at the time relatively

small especially in comparison to nations such as the U.S.A and the Australian

Counterculture attracted a very small proportion of the overall Australian population . The

largest number of people to attend a Countercultural artistic event was 45 000 at the 1973

Sunbury festival . The number attending Countercultural political events was somewhat

higher . At the height of the moratorium demonstrations in 1970 one march in Melbourne

is estimated to have had 80 000 - 100 000 people in attendance but attendance at marches

in Sydney never rose above 25 000 (Horne 1980:56) . These figures may seem to point

to an impressively large Counterculture but it must be remembered that a large number of people involved in moratorium marches were not members of the Counterculture but unionists , ALP members , pacifists , Christians and members of a variety of other organisations opposed to Australian involvement in the Vietnam War. This illustrates the second unique feature of the Australian Counterculture - its relatively peaceful co-existence with mainstream society . Counterculture - Mainstream Society relations never escalated into violent confrontation in Australia as occurred elsewhere . There are no significant examples of State brutality against the Counterculture in Australia and conversely terrorist groups such as The Weathermen and The Angry Brigade did not emerge amongst frustrated and impatient Counterculturalists in Australia as they did in the U.S.A , U.K , Germany , Italy and Japan . While many of the members of foreign Countercultures had , by the end of the 1960s , come to believe that revolution was necessary most of those involved in the Australian Counterculture remained inside mainstream political process and were content to work for the end of decades of Liberal Government and the election of the ALP under Whitlam . This brings us to the third unique feature of the Australian Counterculture - its lack of synchronicity with its overseas counterparts .

While the Counterculture in Europe and the U.S.A reached the peak of its influence in 1968 (see Hewison 1986) and went into decline from then on , the

Australian Counterculture did not reach the peak of its influence until a few years later in the 1970s. The Australian anti-war movement began in 1965 . In 1966 the Liberal Party comfortably won an election by virtue of its support for , compared to the ALP's opposition to , Australian participation in the Vietnam War . It wasn't until 1970 that large numbers of people (i.e tens of thousands) began participating in the moratorium movement and public opinion turned against the war (see Gerster and Basset 1991) . The most significant long-term achievement of the Counterculture - its contribution to the election of Whitlam didn't occur until the end of 1972 . There were no Countercultural rock festivals held in Australia until 1970 . Arguably the most significant Countercultural festival - the Aquarius Arts Festival , which established Nimbin as an alternative lifestyle epicentre , didn't take place until 1973 . The most widely attended Counterculture rock festival - Sunbury - started in 1972 , peaked in 1973 and was poorly attended and thereafter discontinued in 1975 . Though Australia's Counterculture got underway and peaked later than its overseas counterparts it disintegrated far more rapidly . Like its foreign counterparts it was in a state of collapse by the mid 1970s with the anti-Fraser campaign at the end of 1975 the last notable example of Countercultural political activity . Thereafter the remaining members , with the exception of some tenacious alternative lifestylers largely concentrated in northern N.S.W , became involved in the more narrowly focused and pragmatic 'new social movements ' or retreated from political involvement altogether .

3. The emergence of non-oppositional PMC subculture .

Up until the mid 1970s radical groups , such as 'Old Left' socialist and communist groups and more recently the New Left libertarian socialist counterculture , had been the prime sites for the affective investments of Australia's disaffected PMC youth . The interest shown in largely apolitical bohemian subcultures over the last two decades by PMC youth is historically aberrant and puzzling in light of the emergence of economic conditions which would seem to encourage rather than inhibit radicalism .

The CCCS writers saw the subcultures participated in by middle and working class youth as distinctly different with the primary difference being the explicitly oppositional nature of middle class subcultures . The CCCS writers frequently referred to middle class subcultures as "countercultures" emphasising their political nature . Clark et al (1975:61) who considered middle and working class subcultures so different that they were unsure they could be dealt with within the same theoretical framework assert -

The objective oppositional content of working-class sub-cultures expresses itself socially . . . The countercultures take a more overtly ideological or political form . They make articulate their opposition to dominant values and institutions .

The working class youth involved in a subculture was viewed by the CCCS writers as having some conception , derived from experiences at school , on the street and in the labour market and workplace , of being at the bottom of a stratified society . Thus working class subculturalists had a basic form of class conscious - i.e a recognition of their lowly position but were sufficiently deluded by various 'State Ideological Apparatuses' that they did not possess a more developed form of class consciousness which may have lead them to an understanding of the operation of their society and the possibility of engaging in political action to create an alternative society .Working class youth subcultures 'profanely articulated ' the existence of a subordinate and dissatisfied group but did not engage in any (efficacious) activities to change the circumstances of either their members or the class as a whole from which they emerged . These subcultures were a picturesque but futile attempt to solve the problems of a working class existence - as Clarke et al (1975: 47,48) put it -

a resolution which , because pitched largely at the symbolic level , was fated to fail . The problematic of a subordinate class experience can be , 'lived through' , negotiated or resisted ; but it cannot be resolved at that level or by those means . . . Subcultural strategies . . . 'solve ' but in an imaginary way , problems which at the concrete material level remained unresolved .

The primary and crucial difference between the working class subculturalist and his middle class peer according to the CCCS writers was that while the working class subculturalist was ultimately little more than a hapless fantast his middle class counterpart was a dissident . Ironically , disaffected middle class subculturalists were seen to possess the class consciousness that their proletarian peers lacked - not so much at the basic level of identifying as part of the working class - but at the level of possessing a highly developed understanding of the workings of capitalist society and having a vision of an alternative society . While middle class subculturalists , like their working class peers , adopted a distinctive style this sartorial display was the starting rather than end point of their resistance . The CCCS writers characterised middle class subculturalists as hegemonically unincorporated and undeluded to the true workings of the capitalist system and engaged in far more productive and politically significant forms of resistance and opposition to their society than their less educated , less aware working class peers.

It is now difficult to argue that the type of straightforward distinctions between working and middle class subculturalists CCCS writers so confidently asserted were fundamental can actually be seen to exist - at least in the contemporary Australian situation . Though all four of the Australian PMC subcultures surveyed below in Chapter Three share similarities with the Counterculture only one of the subcultures , the smallest one at that , comes close to replicating its political consciousness and activism . The

consciousness of the vast bulk of contemporary PMC subculturalists accords much more closely with the confused and largely apolitical consciousness the CCCS saw as typical of uneducated working class subculturalists than with the type of politically aware worldview middle class subculturalists are supposed to hold .

The most commonly cited cause of the apparent political apathy of contemporary PMC youth and their failure to create and participate in any movement similar to the Counterculture over the last two decades has been the unfavourable economic circumstances that eventuated once the post war boom and with it the 'post-scarcity' society came to an abrupt end in the early 1970s . Proponents of this position argue that a depressed labour market and in particular a weak and crowded graduate job market has lead to widespread conservatism amongst PMC youth concerned about the prospect of a lifetime of underemployment or even unemployment . Hewison (1986:276) one of the more perceptive and sober chroniclers of the Counterculture makes use of this sort of argument commenting on the English situation -

we have to recognize that 1968 was an upheaval within the middle-class that ultimately found an accommodation , partly through absorption , partly through coercion , and , most important through changes in the economic conditions that had helped bring the crisis about .

Hewison (1986:298) argues the recessed economic conditions since the mid 1970s have

"for the economic optimism of the counter-culture" substituted " a dole culture where

nihilism rules " and " a new generation has emerged that has abandoned even the hopes of

the 1960s , and which can only replay the past in terms of pastiche , parody or irony " .

Horne (1980:42,176) makes a similar argument about the reasons for the rise and decline

of radicalism amongst PMC youth in Australia .

By the mid 60s and early 70s . . . 'youth' was seen as a new civilisation ,

about to take over . This came from a confident generation that had grown up not in an

age of depression or war but in a period of previously unimaginable prosperity . . . With

the new prosperity , the provision of both more and more education and more and more

variety in more and more jobs could be taken for granted : there was plenty of safety in

risk . . . What we do know now is that by 1972 , although it did not appear so then , the

great post-war world boom was over . This in itself puts a dividing line between those

times and now . The line grew thicker when in 1973 the oil-producing countries put up

their prices . The basis of social change is no longer as easy as it could still seem in

1972 .

Docker (1988:299) has written of Australian PMC youth's reaction to the strong labour market of the late 1960s and early 1970s -

Students could expect to get good jobs because of their tertiary training . . . It was this very confidence in the possibility of employment - they could always drop out because they knew they could always drop back in - that made employment itself, routinized work, seem contemptible . It was this that gave . . . young counterculturalists the sense that anything in history was possible now , since a secure economic future could always be deferred until they might want to take it up - hopefully on their terms .

Following Docker et al's reasoning the cause of contemporary PMC youth's lack or radicalism is that those facing an insecure economic future do not believe "anything in history is possible now " . Both Maslen and Slattery (1994) and Gerster and Bassett (1991) make use of exactly this type of argument in discussing the Australian situation suggesting that PMC youth will be politically engaged in economically favourable conditions but behave like apolitical careerists in recessed ones . Maslen and Slattery (1994:160) aver -

The collective conscience of the modern student is drawn in ever smaller arcs . The majority seem to have shrunk its shell , or got on with the business of building

careers . And why not ? Compared with the endless summer of the 1960s , students face a

tough , competitive world where jobs are scarce and good careers , more than global

peace , are to be fought for .

The problem with this argument is that while it may explain the last three
decades it is not borne out by historical experience . Youth from the middle to upper strata
of society have over the last two centuries frequently participated in radical movements in
recessed economic conditions - indeed it has been more common for bourgeois youth
finding themselves overeducated and underemployed to become radical and work for
social change than become conservative careerists frantically competing for the limited
career opportunities that do exist . Yinger (1982) has asserted that a existence of a group
of people experiencing relative deprivation and status inconsistency is one of the major
generating causes of countercultures . There are numerous examples of educated middle
class youth from the Russian Nihilists of the 1860s (see Esler 1971) to the Nazis of
Weimar Germany (see Fromm 1941) whose response to largely blocked opportunity
structures and underemployment was political activism . In the Australian context socialist
and communist groups both experienced a large influx of PMC youth during the depressed
decades of the 1890s and 1930s . More recently it is worth noting that the most influential
and successful political movement of recent decades arose out of the overeducation and
underemployment of PMC females (see Friedan 1963) .

There is limited historical evidence to support the proposition the radicalism of PMC youth is tied to favourable economic conditions and their conservatism to unfavourable ones . While the constraints faced by contemporary PMC youth compared to the advantageous climate their Countercultural predecessors enjoyed should be recognised a simplistic economic determinist argument cannot be accepted as sufficient in explaining the apoliticism of contemporary PMC youth .

4.Growing up Post-Marxist

The Ehrenreichs (1977) argue that the class interest of the PMC , especially its non- corporate fraction lie in the creation of a technocratic socialist society in which the PMC would occupy the position now enjoyed by the capitalist class . The unfavourable economic circumstances confronting the non-corporate fraction of the PMC especially its younger members since the mid 1970s means many in the class fraction have little to gain from the continuation of free market capitalism and conversely potentially much to gain from the move towards a (technocratic) socialist society . However the proletarianization of the non-corporate fraction of the PMC has not lead to increased radicalism amongst its membership . On the contrary , interest in Marxism and

transforming or reforming capitalism has dropped to it lowest level ever . This has less to do with the failures of socialist societies than those of the Left , and in particular the Academic Left , since the mid 1970s .

Many contemporary theorists (see for example Laclau and Mouffe 1985) are justifiably critical of the essentialist notion previously accepted within sociology that individuals and classes are coherent unified subjects whose actions and consciousness reflect an essence . Such theorists argue that the discourses an individual is exposed to and accepts will play a large role in determining which identities will assume salience for them   . The proposition that an individual's consciousness will be , to a large extent , constructed from available discourses rather than simply be an expression of their position in the productive system ; would now seem to be reasonable and widely accepted amongst theoreticians . For instance Baxter et al (1993:259-260) persuasively argue the lack of class consciousness exhibited by Australians is a reflection of the absence of class as a category in Australian political and industrial discourses . It would seem the different consciousnesses and hence actions of the Counterculturalists and contemporary subculturalists are a result of the different discourses available to them .

The Counterculturalists in Australia made use of a Western neo-Marxist discourse . It is worth noting that they did not construct this discourse - it had been in

existence for a number of years prior to the Counterculture coming into being . In Australia as elsewhere in the western world academics and intellectuals came together , particularly from the mid 1950s onwards , to consider the problem of how to create a socialist society free from the deficiencies of the U.S.S.R . By 1963 , several years before the Australian student Counterculture began to emerge   , a collection of Melbourne intellectuals were publishing Arena and advancing the 'Arena thesis ' which , drawing on contemporary European and American Western Marxist ideas , presented a revisionist version of Marxism in which the intelligentsia was effectively substituted for the proletariat . As Milner (1991:58) observes , once the antiwar movement got underway in Australia in the mid to late 1960s -

students came to provide a peculiarly receptive and sympathetic social milieu for a rapidly developing New Left , variously influenced by Arena itself , by libertarianism , Maoism , Trotskyism , by the US Monthly Review and by the various western marxist thinkers successively translated into English by the British New Left Review ".

The Counterculturalists of the 1960s and 1970s were the last in a long line of PMC individuals who took on a radical consciousness and identity as a result of a Marxist discourse . Before examining the discourse available to contemporary PMC

members and its effects , it is worthwhile briefly examining the Marxist discourse which has been crucial to the development of PMC radicalism until recent times . In the Marxist discourse the social formation is an expression of the division of capital and labour . Those who own the means of production possess power and use it to control those classes beneath them in their own interests . By freeing oneself from the ideology which works in the interests of the ruling class , individuals/classes can come to an accurate perception of reality . Once an individual/class has done this it can begin working to bring about the utopic society history has been progressing towards by attacking the ruling class and creating a society in which the means of production are commonly owned and material goods will be distributed equitably . In the teleological Marxist discourse there is a vision of an alternative and utopic society and a clearly defined program of action offered on how to bring it about . Given these features we would expect the Marxist discourse to encourage individuals to engage in political action and of course it has a long history of doing this . Sercombe (1993:8) has commented -

Marxism's approach is sometimes savagely reductionistic . . . But . . . Marxism is good at identifying targets for action . . . Marxism was developed for activism , produces activists (sometimes) and activists like it . Even activists who are not Marxist - such as feminists , liberation theologians , and ecologists - have found the language , frameworks and constructs invaluable and adaptable to their contexts . This is the advantage of a 'totalising ' theory .

Marxist discourse has since the early 1980s been increasingly usurped and replaced by a post-structuralist discourse within the Academy and elsewhere . This discourse is a reaction to and antithesis of the Marxist discourse which preceded it . In Foucault's frameworks there is no central dynamic such as the economy which generates and structures the social formation - the economy is merely one of many domains in which power is exercised . Foucault (1980:142) is as uninterested in issues around class and class struggle as Marxist are obsessed by them , and cautions -

one should not assume a massive and primal condition of domination , a binary structure with "dominators " on one side and "dominated" on the other , but rather a multiform production of relations of domination .

In Foucault's frameworks the power relation rather than the production relation is the primary focus and like the Functionalists Foucault presents a relatively benign picture of the operation of power in the social formation . For Foucault power is not something possessed by the ruling class and used to serve their own interests and nor is it subordinate to and in the service of the economy . Power is rather diffusely distributed within a network and possessed by everybody . Relations are always reciprocal rather than one sided . Power is productive creating new capabilities and aptitudes . It does not

coerce and misrepresent but regulates and routinises . There is no distinction between accurate and false perception of the real world , between truth and ideology -rather there are only discourses which are themselves neither true nor false but which produce effects of truth . Foucault and other post-structuralists are also anti-historicist - there is no notion of progress or model of linear purposeful time in their work . The reductio ad absurdum of this postmodern antihistoricism was reached with Fukuyama's (1992) now famous announcement of the end of history . Foucault argues that political activism if engaged in at all should only involve local , specific struggles as global struggles merely replace one domination with another . The role of the (PMC) intelligentsia in these struggles should be a modest , non participatory , analytical one - "The project , tactics , and goals to be adopted are a matter for those who do the fighting . What the intellectual can do is to provide the instruments of analysis " (Foucault 1980:62) . Foucault provides no grounds for distinguishing the worth and importance of these different small scale struggles .

Whatever its other merits , it is difficult to conceive of a discourse less likely to promote political activism and more likely to promote a relativistic nihilism or , at best , impotent confusion . There is in stark contrast to the Marxist discourse no vision of an alternative utopic society or program of action for bringing it about . There is in fact no real world to transform as reality isn't just reflected in but actually constructed by discourse . A number of theorists have commented the enervating effects of post-structuralist discourse . Sercombe (1993:9-10) has observed of post-structuralist theory -

the kaleidoscope of vision , the plurality of voices , the voluptuousness of the sociological landscape which such an approach develops is not good for organising social movements . If , as Foucault says , power is everywhere , and every situation is different , how are people to organise ? If power cannot be seized if there is no central locus of power , where is the target for social action ? . . . Foucault paralyses action because of his refusal to look at anything like the content of the power relation or the meaning of power as a concept .

Sarup (1988:105) states -

There is no freedom in Foucault's world , nor does he have a theory of emancipation . The more powerful the vision of some increasingly total system or logic , the more powerless the reader comes to feel . The critical capacity of Foucault's work is paralysed because the reader is made to think that the project of social transformation is vain, trivial , hopeless .

Milner (1991) who accuses Australia's radical intelligentsia of existing in a state of "state subsidised jouissance" (Milner 1991:116) has remarked -

By comparison with theoretical culturalisms . . . post-structuralism appears both pedagogically and politically inconsequential . Its retreat into an indefinite pluralism that is neither historical nor properly speaking critical (since criticism presupposes some real object external to itself) entails a kind of textual frivolity that is . . . intellectually self indulgent . . . Its textual erotics merely mimic the licensed hedonisms of the officially established utilitarian culture of the (post) modern occident "

Political events (or lack thereof) since the mid 1970s would seem to lend credence to the thesis exposure to post-structuralist discourse inhibits radicalism . While their counterparts in Eastern Europe , China , South Korea and Burma (societies where Marxist discourse was still very much in evidence and which remained relatively uncolonised by post-structuralist discourse) , frequently became involved in large numbers in projects of social transformation , PMC youth in societies in which post-structuralism had become the dominant intellectual paradigm , remained quiescent . What civil disobedience that did take place in these societies was typically carried out by groups unexposed or uninterested in post-structuralist discourse such as uneducated members of the underclass . In Australia student radicalism has been moribund since the late 1970s (around the same time post-structuralism began to supplant Marxism in the Australian Academy) with even such issues as massive overcrowding , the corporatisation of the University system , the introduction of HECS and the Gulf War failing to generate any

significant reaction amongst students (see Maslen and Slattery 1994:159-171) . It might

be argued that post-structuralism has significantly contributed to the political confusion

and apathy of Australian PMC youth since at least the early 1980s . As will be discussed in

Chapter Three , many subculturalists exhibit exactly the kind of despairing and politically

disengaged consciousness theorists such as Sarup and Sercombe argue is the logical result

of being incalculated with post structuralist discourse .

5. The role of the extra-parliamentary and parliamentary Left.

Historically political activism amongst Australian PMC youth has been

most popular during periods where the extra parliamentary or parliamentary left has been

strong and vibrant . During the 1890s and 1930s when socialist and communist political

groups were flourishing , significant numbers of PMC youth became interested and

involved in left politics . Similarly from the late 1960s to mid 1970s when the ALP under

leadership of Whitlam was in the political ascendant large numbers of PMC youth also

became affectively invested in left politics . While Counterculturalists elsewhere in the

western world , notably in the U.S.A during the Johnston administration , found

themselves in conflict with and opposed to the parliamentary left the Australian

Counterculture was locked in a symbiotic relationship with the ALP with its parliamentary

leader having the status and role enjoyed only by student leaders in other nations .

Gerster and Basset (1991:167) have noted -

The story of Sixties radicalism in Australia . . . is inseparable from the symbolic figure of Gough Whitlam and the Labor Party he lead to power in December 1972 . Along with opposition to Vietnam , support for Whitlam was the major political factor during the period . . . To the politically-aware school students of the 1960s . . . Whitlam was the man .

Whitlam , Gerster and Basset (1991:167) argue , brilliantly exploited -

the spirit of unrest amongst youth , particularly amongst rebellious , but ideologically chaotic , university students . . . The sniff of Establishment power was enough to attract even the most intractable campus radicals . At Monash the final term of 1972 saw many staff and students working together to support the ALP campaign . . . Despairing left-wing intellectuals embraced him with almost a religious fervour .

Part of the nexus between a vibrant left politics and PMC radicalism is undoubtedly the previously discussed phenomenon of available discourses making certain identities possible but this does not account for why PMC youth have remained quiescent during periods when left discourses were available to them . It would seem reasonable to assume that PMC youth like other groups are most inclined to become politically engaged

when they believe significant political change is achievable while remaining fatalistic during periods when political struggle seems pointless . During the depressed years of the 1890s and 1930s , when socialist and communist groups were thriving and during the extraordinary boom years of the late 1960s and early 1970s , with the determinedly reformist ALP in the political ascendant , it appeared that revolutionary change was possible and PMC individuals young and otherwise became involved in significant numbers in the political process .

Since the mid 1970s the Right has been in the ascendant in Australia as in much of the Western world and PMC individuals have had little reason to believe left wing political activism is likely to be effective in bringing about a socialist utopia . The available vehicles for left wing political activism have declined dramatically . The extra parliamentary left groups so in evidence in the 1890s , 1930s and from the late 1960s to mid 1970s , have been in dramatic decline over the last two decades and the ALP , which played such a crucial role in the Australian Counterculture , has abandoned the (moderately) socialist agenda it once held and moved to the Right . In stark contrast to the Whitlam government , the Hawke and Keating Governments embraced economic rationalist policies inimical to the class interests of the non-corporate fraction of the PMC . Reducing the size and role of the public sector , privatisation , the reintroduction of the university fees Whitlam had abolished , the corporatisation , overcrowding and

underfunding of the university system all disadvantaged members of the non-corporate fraction of the PMC .

The cautious pragmatism of the post-Whitlam ALP may have translated into long term electoral success but it was not designed to or capable of attracting the type of intense affective investment from PMC youth that occurred during the Whitlam era . The Australian Democrats and various Green Groups have , to some extent , filled the vacuum created by the ALP's move to the right and have the type of social democratic/socialist agenda attractive to youth from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC . However these groups have achieved only minority representation in state and federal parliaments and none of these groups are in any position to implement their agenda of radically transforming Australian society . Nor does it seem likely , at present , that they ever will be . With few vehicles for progressive political activism and the relative impotence of those that do exist it appears a large section of non-corporate PMC have simply resigned themselves to the status quo believing an overtly political response to the problems they confront and concerns they hold would be ineffective and pointless .

6.Identity Politics , the new social movements and PMC youth

Progressive politics has , since the rise of the New Left in Australia as elsewhere in the western world , moved away from a focus on class and exploitation (of the working class by the ruling class) to a focus on the oppression of various groups by dominant structures and ideologies . Burgmann and Milner (1996:120) argue a situation has come to exist where radical intellectuals " could easily outbid their conservative counterparts in their determination to distance themselves from any form of class analysis and association with the labour movement " . The new social movements are the antithesis of the old (Labourist , Socialist and Communist) social movements with the most significant difference being that while the old social movements were solely interested in distributional issues and improving the plight of the economically disadvantaged , the new social movements are proudly 'post-materialist' interested in quality of life issues . One would expect that the post materialist new social movements would appeal to those with a progressive political consciousness fortunate enough not to be overly concerned with basic issues of securing and maintaining employment and a sufficient income . Unsurprisingly the new social movements overwhelmingly attract their membership and support from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC . Burgmann (1993:5-6) has observed -

It does not appear to be the 'new middle class' in the human service professions in private industry that form the support base for new social movements . . . the crucial categories are those employed in the public sector , as teachers and

academics , social workers , and public servants generally ; or else those deployed as

students , awaiting entry to these professions . The question then arises : does the nature

of their occupation , which is comparatively free of commercial imperatives and is either

human-focused or intellectual , incline them to new social movement activity ; or are the

people sympathetic to new social movements inclined to prefer this kind of occupation ?

Most likely , both forces are at work .

While the new social movements have since the demise of the Counterculture provided a focus for the affective investments of a section of the non-corporate fraction of the PMC there has remained a large pool of disaffected non-corporate PMC individuals who feel alienated from mainstream society but uninspired by and uninterested in the new social movements . The reason for the new social movements unattractiveness to a large segment of its natural constituency may be a result of its somewhat dated post-materialist concerns . The new social movements emerged in favourable economic circumstances in which PMC individuals were relatively assured of attractive secure employment in the core labour market - as Burgmann (1993:2-3) has observed the post materialist culture shift was -

attributable to the economic prosperity , physical security and political

stability of advanced Western societies during the postwar boom , allowing young people

in particular the luxury of ignoring material considerations and producing new forms of consciousness .

As discussed in Chapter One , PMC youth over recent decades have been increasingly confronted with "material considerations" in the form of underemployment , unemployment , low wages and job insecurity . That large section of non-corporate PMC without secure , personally satisfying , reasonably well paid employment in the public sector facing real concerns over issues of employment and income is unlikely to feel the postmaterialist new social movements address or even recognise their most pressing concerns . Impressionistic evidence would seem to point to something of generation gap between the last wave of PMC baby boomers who established the new social movements , who came of age in the 1970s and were able to relatively easily secure employment in academe , or elsewhere in the public service , and the post baby boom generation who , facing far less favourable economic conditions , find the postmaterialist agenda of the movements , founded by their elders largely irrelevant to their circumstances and concerns . Another possible reason for the disinterest in contemporary progressive politics by non-corporate PMC youth is its narrow focus and a belief they are not part of its constituency.

Frankel (1984:128) has observed -

the old preoccupation or monopoly of class issues has been supplanted within particular segments of social movements who place questions of gender , race , animal rights , sexuality , etc above all other issues . Or rather , all social relations are single-mindedly filtered through the prism of one category - gender , race , species , sexuality or whatever .

In stark contrast to the relative unity of the 1960s and 1970s radical activity has become highly fragmented with a wide variety of groups working generally independently of one another for modest improvements in the situation those they claim to represent . There seems no apparent possibility of these separate groups coming together in united action to attempt to generate the kind of significant structural change that might improve the economic situation of the non-corporate fraction of the PMC as a whole (as opposed to just certain groups within it) . Such a weak and divided left can hardly be expected to attract the affective investment of a large cross section of disaffected non corporate PMC youth the way the Counterculture managed to do from the mid 1960s to mid 1970s .

That majority of non-corporate PMC individuals who do not identify as homosexual , members of ethnic or religious minorities or feminists are also likely to feel to feel their concerns are regarded as irrelevant or illegitimate by a left obsessed with of

identity politics . The situation of the PMC male is particularly unenviable - at a time when he finds himself increasingly economically insecure he is constructed as a quasi -villainous all powerful oppressor (and hence acceptable hate object) in much progressive political discourse . As Grossberg (1992) has observed the white , heterosexual middle class male has been forced into service as the singular dominant other against which every oppressed group can measure its subordination . It seems unlikely that average (non-homosexual , non-ethnic) PMC males are going to be attracted to progressive movements which take no interest in their concerns and indeed frequently construct them as the enemy .

The PMC woman (even when heterosexual , Anglo-Celtic and economically privileged) receives far less censorious treatment from the left than her male counterpart . Feminism has undoubtedly been the most successful of all the new social movements and has significant support among young PMC females . Nonetheless a large proportion of young PMC women do not identify as feminists and do not feel Feminism is particularly relevant to their lives or addresses their primary concerns . It would appear the new social movements in particular and progressive politics in general have since the demise of the Counterculture actively alienated or at best simply failed to address the concerns of a large section of the non-corporate PMC which make up its natural constituency.

7.The end of ideology and the return of futilitarianism.

The present conservative political climate , and the reaction to it of youth from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC , parallels the situation that existed from the late 1940s to early 1960s . Long before Fukuyama's 1992 truimphalist announcement theorists such as Shils (1955) , Lipset (1959) and Bell (1960) had , throughout the later half of the 1950s , proclaimed the 'end of ideology' by which they meant there was general consensus , across the political spectrum , about the social democratic compromise that had emerged in post-war western societies . At this time , many leftists found themselves in a quandary - while still critical of capitalism , confronted with the totalitarian police state of the U.S.S.R they believed they could no longer work towards a socialist utopia for fear that the Soviet experience would repeat itself . Confronted with the U.S.S.R many leftists embraced Pareto's and Michels pessimistic ideas on the 'circulation of elites ' and the 'iron law of oligarchy ' - i.e that fundamental change to an egalitarian society is impossible and that there will always be an elite and a powerless mass in any society .

Dissatisfied with their existing societies yet unable to believe any more in the possibility of creating a better one , youth from the non-corporate fraction on the PMC

throughout the Western world in the postwar era tended to opt for a type of downbeat largely apolitical bohemianism and affective investment in a philosophy of despair . Throughout Europe , the U.S.A and Britain this meant embracing existentialism with its focus on the individual isolated in an absurd universe . Existentialism never took hold Australia's PMC intelligentsia but a relatively similar philosophical position variously described as 'futilitarianism' , 'anarchistic futilitarianism' , and 'pessimistic anarchism' did (see Coombs 1996) .

Coombs (1996) in her examination of the Push returns again and again to the paradoxical and hopeless position those PMC individuals making up the Push themselves found themselves in being natural supporters of the left but unable to believe in its vision of a socialist utopia . Coombs (1996:viii) notes the Push rejected the conservative values of the Menzies era -

But they didn't express their distaste for Menzies by supporting the Labor Party or joining the Communists . Rather , they stepped outside the conventional parameters of both social and political life . . . They were not out to change the world , but to interpret it . The Sydney Libertarians . . . were politically radical without being either committed socialists or communists . Intellectually they were anarchists , but they didn't do much in the way of anarchist activity .

Elsewhere Coombs (1996:x) describes the Push as "a non-activist social movement " and Coombs (1996:53-54) also notes -

the Libertarians rejected what they saw as the 'utopian ' socialism of Marx . This reluctance to believe in a socialist revolution permanently affected the political complexion of the Push and set it apart from other radical movements in Australia . Essentially the Push was a leftist movement that did not believe in the goals of the Left .

The futility the futilitarians lived with was a refusal to accept the present society combined with the refusal to believe in the possibility of a better one . They believed protest and struggle were good but were unconvinced that they would achieve much . The only appropriate course of action was a type of despairing 'permanent protest' against the status quo . One member of the Push summed up this futilitarian position thus -

Contrary to the utopian , the libertarian looks not to some future society in which authoritarianism will have been got rid of and freedom supposedly brought into existence for the first time . Instead , he takes it to be a matter of keeping alive what

already exists , of keeping up protest , keeping to struggling to emancipate himself from myths and illusions , and of keeping going his own positive activities " (in Coombs 1996:56)[3] .

The conservative political climate that existed between the end of World War Two and the mid 1960s seems to have reappeared . As the actions of the federal ALP between 1983-1996 demonstrate once again broad consensus has emerged across the mainstream political spectrum this time around the belief that the role of the State must be wound back and the free market be allowed to operate with a minimum of regulation . After the dissipation of the Counterculture , extraordinary success of the New Right in implementing its agenda throughout the first world during the 1980s and 1990s and finally the collapse of the Soviet Union many contemporary progressives would appear to be as pessimistic about the possibility of challenging the status quo and creating a humane socialist society as their 1950s futilitarian predecessors . Once again a Gallic philosophy verging on the nihilistic , seemingly perfectly designed to promote a sense of despondent ineffectuality , has become widely subscribed to amongst the PMC intelligentsia of the western world . Foucault argues ,as Pareto and Michels did three decades previous , that supposedly revolutionary change will only replace one domination with another . Marxism is once again judged a dangerous historicist ideology guaranteed to lead to tyranny . The New Left belief that it is possible to create an utopic libertarian socialist society free from the flaws of Communism as it developed in the U.S.S.R and elsewhere has been

abandoned . Foucault teaches that only piecemeal change arising out of small scale local struggles should be aspired to .

Contemporary disaffected members of the PMC dissatisfied with the status quo but pessimistic about the prospect of reform or revolution have reacted similarly to their 1950s counterparts stepping outside "the conventional parameters of social and political life " (Coombs 1996:viii) , opting for bohemianism and as their working class counterparts have historically done becoming involved in subcultures rather than political activism .

ENDNOTES

[1] Aitkin , D (1977) <u>Stability and Change in Australian Politics</u> ANU Press , Canberra

[2] The Eureka Youth League is one of the better known of these groups .

[3] Baker , J (1963) "Sydney Libertarianism " in <u>The Sydney Line</u> quoted in Coombs , A (1996) <u>Sex and Anarchy - The life and death of the Sydney Push</u> Viking , Melbourne

CHAPTER THREE

Contemporary Australian PMC Youth Subculture

1. The Indie Subculture .

(i) Genealogy -From the mid 1960s onwards , rock'n'roll music , supplanted jazz and folk as the preferred music of youth from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC . During the latter half of the 1960s 'underground ' artists began producing a more challenging , self consciously artistic and avant-garde form of rock aimed at attracting a PMC audience with the cultural capital to appreciate it . The underground psychedelic rock scene in Australia (revolving around bands such as Daddy Cool , Tamam Shud , Khavas Jute , Russell Morris and the Captain Matchbox's Whoopee Band) came into being in the late 1960s/early 1970s . The poorly attended , fourth and final Sunbury festival in 1975 might be seen as marking its conclusion . There was no cataclysmic watershed marking the transition from one era to another in Australia but from 1976 onwards bands such as The Saints , Radio Birdman and The Birthday Party began producing music aimed at and consumed by the same audience as , but significantly different to , (aesthetically and philosophically) , psychedelic rock . Since the late 1970s indie music[1] has been the favoured genre of music amongst those PMC youth who regard themselves as a cultural elite uninterested in and uncatered for by formulised popular culture aimed at a mass audience .

(ii) <u>Size and Make up</u> - If all consumers of indie music were to be classified as members of a subculture , (a misguided assertion as will be latter discussed) , then that subculture would undoubtedly be the largest and most economically and culturally powerful subculture in the country with only the Rave subculture coming anywhere close to equalling its influence . Hundreds of thousands of individuals regularly consume indie music in its recorded and live forms . There is a sufficiently large audience for the music to support a large number of record companies , shops , music newspapers , magazines , zines , pubs and clubs , regular large festivals , a national radio network (JJJ) and plethora of community and university radio stations . No serious research has been done on the demographic characteristics of indie music consumers but impressionistic evidence overwhelmingly suggests that both performers and consumers of indie music are from PMC backgrounds and tend to be Anglo-Celtic . The music appears to appeal to males and females equally . Though the age range of indie music consumers stretches from the early teens to early 30s the majority of Indie fans , especially those who attend live performances of the music , would appear to be in the 16-25 age group .

(iii) <u>Activities and affective investments of members</u> - Consumers of indie music can be divided into two broad groupings . One group evidences low to moderate affective investment - they may participate in major events such as festivals and attend performances given by , and purchase the recordings of , certain artists but they do not regard their participation in the 'alternative scene' as the , or one of the , most important factors in the way they define themselves and are defined by others . The majority of

consumers of indie music would fall into this category and it would be difficult to argue these people are part of a discrete social group . Another group of indie music consumers exhibits a far more intense affective investment and it would seem reasonable to argue that the members of this group constitute a subculture . These are individuals who exhibit a distinctive style , self-label themselves as 'Alternative' and for whom participation in the alternative scene is a dominant source of identity , meaning and pleasure .

Even for the group exhibiting a high level of affective investment , involvement in the subculture is mainly a leisure time affair . Indie subculturalists , unlike their Counterculture predecessors , do not 'drop out ' . Most members of the subculture would , like their conventional peers , either be involved in higher education or employment or some combination of the two . While members of the subculture typically distance themselves from a conservative clean cut look few , unlike for example Ferals , make their appearance so confronting as to endanger their chances of keeping or acquiring employment . With the exception of the consumption of illicit drugs Indie subculturalists do not appear to commonly engage in any deviant or illegal activities . While Indie subculturalists may congregate together in share housing , these living arrangements tend not to be communes/collectives of the type experimented with by Counterculturalists . The main common activity of the subcultures members is listening to indie music in its live or recorded form . Consumption of alcohol and/or drugs while consuming the music in its live form is common .

(iv)Consciousness of members - When Rock began to attract a PMC audience , (PMC) journalists , music critics and academics began the task of constructing rock as intelligent , challenging , liberating , instructive "art" rather than banal , formulised , escapist 'mass culture ' . These various arbiters and opinion leaders did not reject the split between (admirable) high culture and (contemptible) mass culture they merely sought to shift the boundaries of high culture till they included those genres of popular music (e.g folk rock , psychedelic rock , art rock) which attracted a primarily educated PMC audience . Bourdieu (1984:18) has observed "nothing more clearly affirms one's 'class' , nothing more infallibly classifies , than tastes in music " . The PMC , especially its non-corporate fraction prides itself on being a cultural elite having the cultural capital to appreciate challenging and complex cultural forms . From the mid 1960s until the present there has a constant concern amongst youthful PMC music audiences to demarcate their "artistic" popular music from the other genres of popular music attracting a mass (i.e uneducated , philistine working class) audience . From the mid 1970s indie music has been , (as the progressive rock of the late 1960s and early 1970s had previously been) , constructed by its audience as pop music's Other - 'Art' for a PMC audience capable of appreciating its originality , inventiveness , intellectuality , subtleties , ironies , allusions and complexities .

Indie is the diminutive form of independent as in independent record company . Indie music in its recorded form typically , (though not always) , emanates from those record companies labelled as independents rather than majors . In the view of Indie subculturalists as well as a large number of writers (see Gillett 1971 , Peterson and Berger

1975 , Chapple and Garofalo 1977) the independents are the antithesis of the majors in the same way indie music is the antithesis of pop music . The independents in this argument are adventurous entrepreneurs prepared to record and disseminate innovative and interesting music while the majors are lumbering behemoths who obsessed with risk minimisation and profit maximisation will churn out bland , formulaic pop until such time as the independents capture enough of the market to jolt them into action .

Rowe (1995:24) has written -

The term independent (often shortened to 'indie') is most commonly deployed as both a noun and adjective in representing the relationship of an organisation (such a group or a record company) to its discursive opposite , which is usually referred to as a 'major' , itself a synonym for a corporation . The quality of independence is often celebrated because of a posited distance between itself and the undesirable values associated with the production of music in its most rationalized form - what is called here corporate cultural capitalism . The music industry . . . has . . . undergone a pronounced and increasingly globalized concentration of ownership and control . . . and a commensurate increase in the size and complexity of its constituent organizations . This development has produced a negative response among those cultural producers and consumers who see the corporation as representing the triumph of profiteering , instrumentalism , control and manipulation over music making , romanticism , artistic freedom and unmanaged pleasure . In contrasting independents and majors , the

former's apologists (such as Gillett 1971) do not necessarily see the 'indies' as entirely

insulated from capitalist practice , but rather suggest the possibility that , by operating

on a different scale , according to different motives and under different social relations

of production , independent aesthetics and politics will be more 'authentic' and

progressive than is possible under a corporate regime .

The simplistic and romantic anti-corporatist view described by Rowe appears to enjoy wide currency amongst Indie subculturalists and Indie artists . Nonetheless it is not essential for an Indie artist to be on a independent rather than major label in Australia in order to be seen as legitimate . The division between majors and independents is , as most musicians if not their fans would presumably be aware , largely illusory in the context of the Australian market in any case with the majors at any one point in time typically supporting in some capacity or outright owning all or most putatively ' independent ' record companies (see Breen 1992 , Walker 1996) .

An artist's authenticity in the eyes of Indie subculturalists is not determined by the size or nature of their record company but by the nature of their music and the audience at which it is aimed . A relatively wide variety of musical styles at any one time may be regarded as indie . In Australia indie music is essentially defined in opposition to both pop music and so called pub or Oz rock . Both genres are assumed by Indie subculturalists to be unartistic muzak aimed at a philistine audience - a primarily teenage female one in the case of pop music and a uneducated male working class one in

the case of pub rock . 'Artistic' indie music in contrast is seen to be aimed at a culturally elite PMC audience . As Indie musician Tex Perkins (in Walker 1996:207) puts it –

we're not the ninety-eight percenters . We're catering to the last two percent that don't want to listen to . . . George Michael . Sure , it's a small group , but it needs to be catered to .

Artists can still be considered authentically Indie whilst attracting audiences other than a PMC one but only as long as they are not perceived to have cynically sacrificed their artistic integrity in order to attract a wider audience . 'Selling out ' for Indie subculturalists essentially consists of an artist moving from producing intelligent music for a discerning elite and hence small PMC audience to producing blander music in the hope of attracting a mass audience and financial success . The type of music produced by Indie artists and the intention behind it is subject to constant scrutiny both in the music press servicing the subculture (on the readers letters page particularly , as well as articles by journalists) and in discussions amongst Indie subculturalists . It is difficult for Indie artists to attract the wide audience necessary to make a full time musical career viable in the small Australian market without alienating their PMC audience (see Battersby and Valtwies (1992) for a description of one Australian band's doomed attempt to attract a pop music audience without losing its Indie constituency) . The simple elitist equation subscribed to by many in the Indie subculture is that an artist's worth is in inverse proportion to their popular appeal . Indie music journalist David Brearly has observed

"inner city audiences " , (i.e Indie subculturalists) , "like to own bands " (in Battersby and Valtwies 1992:29) . The (unconsciously) Adornoist conception of the dichotomy between artistic integrity and popular success seems to be shared by Indie musicians as well as their audiences . The following comment from Kim Salmon (upon leaving for England) is typical of views frequently expressed by Indie musicians -

If we stayed here and tried to increase our audience , we'd have to repackage ourselves - there's just no way around that . That would be okay for some groups but not for us . We certainly wouldn't mind mainstream success , we're not trying to avoid it , but we'd never present ourselves in a way that wasn't totally honest just for the sake of success (in Walker 1996:148).

Like the Counterculture before it the Indie subculture is inextricably intertwined with a wider student culture . A large proportion of Indie subculturalists are tertiary students or ex tertiary students (drop outs and graduates) . As distinct from the Counterculture , many of the musicians patronised by the Indie subculture share their fans PMC background and educational qualifications . Many Indie bands are formed at university , university unions frequently hold band competitions to encourage such new talent and universities provide an established circuit for Indie bands , beginning or well established , to play . Reviews of indie music performances and recordings and interviews with Indie artists feature prominently in the student press . Like its predecessor , the Counterculture , the Indie subculture recruits its members largely from the non-corporate

fraction of the PMC . Indie subculturalists inhabit the same structural location as those involved in the new social movements . However despite occupying the same position which predisposed many of their Countercultural predecessors , as well as some of their contemporaries to radicalism , Indie subculturalists don't engage in activism or express notably progressive political viewpoints .

Despite the absence of the explicit radical political agenda common to members of the New Left , Feminists , Environmentalists , Queer activists etc , Indie subculturalists believe that like these groups they are somehow at odds with a 'mainstream' culture - a view encapsulated in their self-labelling as 'alternative ' . However attempting to identify anything clearly oppositional in the Indie subculture is problematic . Reynolds (1986:253,254) labels the English Indie subculture as a " white middle class bohemianism" and describes its members as existing -

in the interstices of possibility , those gaps in the social fabric where it's possible to convince yourself for awhile that you've not grown up , not given in . . . not just unworldly but prior to blame , not yet responsible for in or for the system . Sixth-formers , students , art-schools , the new 'dole cultures' , alternative career structures . . . wherever it's possible to subsist outside the pressures of adjustment and adaptation , the pressure to make your mind up . For many this exile/asylum will be only temporary .

Reynolds' description of the English Indie subculture applies relatively well to its Australian counterpart and Australian Indie subculturalists do appear to feel themselves in "exile/asylum" from "the system" . Nonetheless Reynolds' comments beg the question of what , apart from perhaps a temporary reluctance to embrace adult responsibilities , differentiates 'alternative' Indie subculturalists from their conventional peers ? The style of the subculture provides an obvious starting point in considering this issue . Indie style draws heavily on traditional working class style . Cheap flannelette shirts , t-shirts , jeans and workman like footwear are all items worn by both working class youth and Indie subculturalists . The conclusion an analyst would be tempted to draw is that this downwardly mobile standard of dress indicates that , like certain of their predecessors in the Push and the New Left , Indie subculturalists possess a romantic conception of and imagined affinity with the working class and their lifestyle .

On the contrary the romanticisation of and identification with the working class ("the people") which has been fairly common in various PMC subcultures over the last 200 years (see above) is absent from the Indie subculture . The Indie style seems more designed to differentiate its wearers from the expensively and conservatively attired members of the corporate fraction of their own class rather than to claim membership of the working class . Indie subculturalists see themselves as existing in similarly straitened circumstances to the proletariat , a perception expressed by the inclusion of cheap and quotidian , or at least seemingly cheap and quotidian , items into Indie style . However the belief of Indie subculturalists that they share a similar material position with the working

class does not translate into a more general positive identification with it . Indeed a contemptuous attitude towards the working class is if anything more vehement within the Indie subculture than in its parent class .

Riley (1992:120-121) drawing on a comment by Nick Cave that The Birthday Party played to the thinkers rather than drinkers (i.e to Indie subculturalists rather than working class pub rock audiences) comments -

The schism between the 'thinkers' and the 'drinkers' reached a peak in the late '70s . The drinkers were that primevally driven mass of philistinic , reactionary suburbanites , the Oz Rockers . Traditionally , suburbia and its ambassadors have been the natural enemy of the avant garde . . . Australia seemed to be , for all those who were displaced from it , a kingdom of the yobbo .

The schism has remained wide since the late 1970s . Turner (1992:22) has written -

There was a point in the mid-1980s when there was a particularly sharp division between those alternative rock music fans who lived in the inner city suburbs in Sydney . . . and those who lived in the West . . . The westies cared little about their counterparts in the city ; in contrast however they were a frequent topic of conversation in the inner city pubs . To the cool cosmopolitans , the full on , unsophisticated , roistering raging of the westies was an affront , an unpalatable reminder of what the

tacky basics of rock music and popular culture were really about : it was impossible to

attend a gig at an outer suburban pub and think you were taking part in some groovy ,

cool , scene .

Walker (1996) in his history of Australian independent music makes

constant reference to the delineation of indie music and its inner city bohemian audience

from pub rock and its working class audience from the outer suburbs . In a representative

passage Walker (1996:77) notes -

'inner city ' , independent bands were accused of elitism . . . The Agents

that had the suburban circuit stitched up didn't want to touch any of this weird shit . And

if the bands ever did manage to play outside the city , they were greeted with apathy if

not outright hostility . There was diversity in both camps . But if the bands that

succeeded on the suburban circuit had one thing in common it was a bottom-line meat-

and-potatoes obviousness - the pub rock ethic - in contrast - the inner-city sound was

accused of pretension .

Indie subculturalists have the classically PMC conception of the proletarian

as a stupid , philistinic , vulgar , provincial , racist , sexist , homophobic and (especially

while drinking) menacing figure . The proletariat is viewed by Indie subculturalists ,

depending on the circumstances , as amusing , contemptible or threatening but not as a

role model or ally . Unlike members of many previous movements made up of

disaffected middle to upper class youth Indie subculturalists neither identify with , nor see salvation in the working class . This does not however mean they identify as middle class . That latest incarnation of the possessively individual , materialist , hard working , ambitious , conformist archetypally bourgeois figure - the so called 'yuppie' generates as much animus if not more amongst Indie subculturalists as does the 'westie' [2] . The animosity and contempt directed towards those pursuing well renumerated careers appears to be more vehement than the mildly derisive and pitying attitude shown towards the 'organisation man' by previous groups of PMC bohemians such as the Push and Counterculturalists . For instance it is difficult to imagine either of these groups embracing a song entitled "Die Organisation Man Die " in the manner contemporary Indie subculturalists have embraced the Painters and Dockers song Die Yuppie Die . The anti-bourgeois' animus of Indie subculturalists , equal to or in excess of that exhibited by working class subculturalists , displayed towards a different fraction of their own class needs to be accounted for if a full understanding of the subculture is to be reached .

Indie musician Dave Graney has remarked "The Australian music scene . . . wasn't prepared for any concept of an inner-city audience being a leader of taste or whatever . They were just overeducated losers" (in Walker 1996:144) . The perception of Indie subculturalists as overeducated losers is widespread . Indie subculturalists more than any other group or subculture made up of young people have been presented in the media as proving the existence of an overeducated , underemployed lost generation - the so called 'Generation X '[3] . Impressionistic evidence suggests that Indie subculturalists

are primarily from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC working outside the core labour market . Members , or those aspiring to become members , of the corporate fraction of the PMC are not commonly found amongst Indie subculturalists . Those in possession of high status , well renumerated employment appear to find the subculture unappealing . Members of the subculture are generally outside the core labour market being students surviving on Austudy and/or poorly paid part time employment , or graduates and drop outs working low status , low pay jobs in the private sector or more frequently public service , or musicians and aspiring musicians surviving on the dole , part-time work or 'day jobs ', artists and aspiring artists doing likewise , or the completely unemployed . It does not seem unreasonable to suggest that , to use Bourdieu's terminology ,   Indie subculturalists possessing significant cultural capital but very little economic capital feel resentful towards the members of the fraction of their class in high status , well renumerated employment .

The relationship between Indie subculturalists existing outside the core labour market , (in the "interstices of possibility" as Reynolds (1986:253) poetically puts it) , and the corporate fraction of the PMC mirrors that classically described in sociology of education studies between academic achievers and failures . The conventional PMC individual in possession of valuable credentials and able to achieve the material success which is a dominant cultural goal in Australian society especially amongst its PMC is subject to much the same derision , resentment , anger and perhaps secret envy from Indie subculturalists as is the gifted student able to achieve academic success from his non-

achieving student peers . The non-achieving student expresses disinterest at the dominant educational goal of academic achievement and contempt for his peers who hold it and chooses to measure success by criteria other than intellectual competence . The Indie subculturalist expresses disinterest in the dominant cultural and in particular class goal of a well renumerated , high status employment and contempt for those who hold such a goal and chooses to measure success by criteria other than occupation and income . This is not to argue there isn't a proportion of individuals who combine participation in the Indie subculture with attractive careers in the core labour market (or the prospect of such a career upon graduation) just as there are students who manage to combine some participation in anti-school subcultures in which non-intellectual competencies are valued with a reasonable academic performance . Nonetheless just as anti-school subcultures are most attractive to and recruit most of their membership from academic low achievers , so the Indie subculture primarily recruits it's membership from that section of the PMC in the weakest position in the labour market and as in anti-school subcultures it is those with the least ability to achieve the approved dominant goal who exhibit the most intense affective investment in the subculture .

This conception of subcultural involvement as a source of consolation and compensation rather than a vehicle for dissent is of course much closer to the liberal American than Gramscian-Marxist conception of subculture . Downes (1966:7) argument that subcultures emerge from the interaction of "a number of actors with similar problems of adjustment for whom , no effective solution yet exists for a common shared problem "

seems more appropriate in explaining the apolitical Indie subculture than CCCS theories which conceptualised middle class subcultures as explicit political challenges to the dominant culture. The changing structure of the economy over the last two decades has meant that a significant proportion of youth from the non-corporate fraction of the Australian PMC , like the American working class youth studied by liberal American theorists in the 1950s and 1960s , now need some type of collective solution to resolve the tensions arising from an inability to attain a middle class lifestyle . Indie subculturalists evidence the type of reaction formation described by Cohen (1955) , inverting the middle class value system so as not to feel inadequate about an inability to achieve career and material success . The Indie subculture is exactly that , a subculture rather than a counterculture . Indie subculturalists' values , attitudes , behaviour and lifestyle pose no serious threat to their host society . Indie subculturalists are not ambitious careerists but neither are they revolutionaries . The proletarianization of the non-corporate fraction of the PMC has not , at least as yet , lead to its radicalisation . Rather proletarianized PMC youth have typically responded to blocked opportunity structures in much the same manner uneducated working class youth typically have - through involvement in seemingly rebellious but ultimately apolitical and diversionary subcultures .

The political activism of Midnight Oil , especially it's lead singer , has attracted considerable journalistic[4] and academic attention (see Ariel and Attwood 1987 , Wark 1988 , Steggels 1992) . Two points need to be made about the Midnight Oil phenomena . Firstly , the band emerged amongst a surfer subculture on Sydney's

Northern Beaches and captured a mass 'pub rock' working class audience early on in their

career . This being the case , it is difficult to classify the band as part of and

representative of the Indie genre . Walker (1996) confidently categorises Midnight Oil as

Oz rock rather than indie in his book - length analysis of indie music , and it appears most

Indie subculturalists agree with this classification . Secondly , it must be noted that

progressive academics in search of fellow travellers in the popular culture industry (and

journalists in search of an interesting story) tend to focus on those exceptional artists

who transcend the role of entertainers to become political activists while paying little or no

attention to all the other artists who fail to exhibit the 'correct ' political attitudes . This

tends to give the impression that Australian musicians , Indie and otherwise , are more

highly politicised than is the case . The activism is of Midnight Oil is not in question but it

must be noted that such political engagement is extraordinary rather normative . Garrett's

contemporaries - indie artists such as Nick Cave , Dave Graney , Tex Perkins , Ed

Kuepper , Kim Salmon , Robert Forster , Grant McLennan , Ron Peno , Ollie Olsen and

Steve Kilbey - have never demonstrated any ambitions to become involved in the political

process . While some Indie artists may , like Garrett , hold pacifist and/or environmentalist

and/or socialist beliefs and may express these views in interviews , or more rarely in their

lyrics and participate in benefit concerts , donate royalties to worthy causes etc it should

be noted that most Indie artists demonstrate a bohemian disinterest in the public world

and politics . Nick Cave's comment on the philosophy of The Birthday Party is typical -

"we have never had , and will never have any desire to make any politically angered

statements about anything . They're all totally selfish , personal statements " (in St.John (ed) 1985:70) .

Riley (1992:115) has observed of late 1970s Australian indie music -

Political activism or 'linkage' with social issues like Britain's Rock against Racism never gained currency in Australia . The impulse to campaign for social change was displaced elsewhere , back to already existing forms of Australian working-class rock .

Australian indie music has remained essentially apolitical since it emerged . The only form of political engagement discernible for most Indie artists is occasional performances at benefit gigs in support of progressive causes . There has not been a significant linkage of Australian indie music to political and social issues as occurred in the late 1970s and mid 1980s Britain with Rock against Racism and Red Wedge[5] .

Unlike folk music , another genre of music that periodically manages to attract a sizeable PMC audience (see Frith 1983) , indie music is concerned with the private rather public sphere , in personal rather than class struggle . Unlike pop which revolves around fantasies of success - be it sexual , romantic , social , occupational or financial indie music typically revolves around portraits of failure and frustration . Reynolds (1986:253-254) has observed -

Indiepop is like a parallel system , unacknowledged by 'Pop' , but bound in reaction : it deals with all the matter written out of pop's script - squalor , antagonism , frustration , difficulty , doubt .

In Australian indie music , as in its overseas counterparts , it is the self rather than society that is critiqued and it is subjects such as self doubt , self contempt , frustration and despair rather than social injustice and visions of a better society which are explored . As the Blues and Country and Western have done for their underclass/working class audiences , indie music gives expression to feelings of personal failure and inadequacy engendered by being trapped in low status , low pay employment . As with consumers of Blues and Country and Western music , Indie subculturalists typically exhibit resignation rather than radicalism .

Mann (1973) divided class consciousness into four categories : firstly class identity - i.e - the definition of oneself as sharing a particular class location ; secondly class opposition -i.e - the perception of the class structure as centred on the permanent opposition of capital and labour ; thirdly class totality - the acceptance that the two previous elements define one's own social situation and the whole of the society in which one lives ; and finally the vision of an alternative social order towards which one moves through class struggle . Using this model we can find little evidence of class consciousness amongst Indie subculturalists . Indie subculturalists have a very vague class identity

defining themselves only in opposition to other classes . As previously discussed they see themselves as exiled from a conformist , careerist , materialist middle class but distinct from the working class . Apart from this Indie subculturalists do not appear to think in class terms or see themselves as belonging to any particular location within the class system . Rather Australian Indie subculturalists seem to possess a quasi-Nietzschean worldview seeing themselves as a small number of exceptional individuals forced to band together for mutual protection against a mass of vapid suburbanites . Riley (1993:120-121) comments on the avant garde and its natural enemy "that primevally driven mass of philistinic , reactionary suburbanites " are a good example of the intellectually elitist rather than class conscious worldview of Indie subculturalists .

An indeterminate sense of class identity is characteristic of PMC subculturalists /counterculturalists whose non-normative lifestyles distinguish them from the majority of their parent class ; while their educational qualifications , cultural capital and backgrounds differentiate them from the working class . The lack of a firm class identity does not preclude individuals reaching the higher stages of class consciousness . Members of the libertarian-socialist New Left had similarly vague class identities yet were very aware of the role capital played in shaping societies and individual's destinies . Indie subculturalists lack the sophisticated grasp of political economy possessed by their Countercultural predecessors . Anti-corporate capitalist sentiment amongst Indie subculturalists seems largely confined to the operations of large music corporations - in particular their supposed failure to support Indie artists and their

encouragement/exploitation of the philistine tastes of the masses . A wider criticism of Capitalism and an awareness of its pernicious effects (other than the encouragement of talentless pop musicians) is not typically present in Indie subculturalists . Rowe (1995:61) has observed that with those involved in the Indie subculture -

critiques of the music industry are often not carried over into a general political position on power , culture and material inequality , resulting in a compartmentalised radical condemnation of the domination of the majors in the rock music industry which is not linked to the wider socio-economic system of which they are key representatives .

Indie subculturalists and musicians have not attempted to subvert and evade capitalist relations as their Countercultural predecessors did with free performances by bands , free stores , co-ops etc . The only activity of Indie subculturalists that comes close to any attempt to subvert capitalism is their support for independent record labels . However these organisations though smaller in scale than the majors take essentially the same form - they are capitalist enterprises aiming to make a profit and are not for instance non-profit co-operatives . Also as previously observed the putative independents are frequently locked into some interdependent relationship with and frequently owned by a major .

In regards to class totality , Indie subculturalists do not seem to perceive their situation as an inevitable result of the workings of capitalist society . Indie subculturalists affinity with depressive anti-heroes (Cave , Morrisey , Cobain et al) and their self condemnatory lyrics seems to indicate they have personalised their economic failure rather than blaming the economic system in which they exist . Indie subculturalists do not appear , in stark contrast to their Countercultural predecessors , to have any vision of an alternative society or any belief that the presently existing one can be significantly improved . This lack of visionary utopianism is unsurprising in a subculture that emerged following the collapse of the Counterculture . Riley (1992:116) has written -

Australia in the late '70s under a Liberal government was a desolate political wasteland . Denial seemed more appropriate a response than joining any organised lobbyist organisation . Solidarity was more accessible within the walls of a pub venue , if only for a few wild and ravaged hours than marching down Swanston Street with already defeated comrades . Negation , originally an important facet of Situationist thought . . . became a useful weapon against boredom .

As discussed in the previous chapter Australia from the landslide defeat of Whitlam until the present has remained a "desolate political wasteland " - at least from the perspective of youth from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC . In such an environment negation would seem to be a more attractive and sensible strategy than political engagement . It seems reasonable to argue that PMC subcultures will tend towards

radicalism rather than disengaged bohemianism in society's in which a strong and vibrant Left exists - such as was the situation throughout the Western World in the late 1960s/early 1970s while conversely articulations between progressive politics and groups of disaffected PMC youths will be slight or non-existent in Societies where the Left is impuissant . While indie music co-exists in a variety of contexts with progressive politics it is not articulated to it . Those radio stations indie music is played on and publications in which it is discussed frequently have a left-liberal perspective and agenda yet apart from a very limited anti-corporatism no such progressive perspective or agenda can be discerned in the attitudes expressed or behaviours engaged in by the majority of Indie subculturalists .

2. The Gothic Subculture.

(i) <u>Genealogy</u> - The Gothic Subculture emerged as a distinct subculture a year or two after the Indie movement got underway in 1976 . Riley (1992) describes a vibrant Gothic subculture in Melbourne , cohering around the Crystal Ballroom and its virtual houseband The Boys Next Door , as being in existence by 1978 . Interestingly the Gothic subculture in Australia appears to have to some extent predated its English counterpart which is not seen to have emerged as an independent subculture distinct from the Punk subculture until the early 1980s (see Mercer 1988) . The Boys Next Door/Birthday Party and their imitators seem to have contributed to a distinct Gothic subculture in Australia emerging in the late 1970s . (The relocation of the Birthday Party to the U.K in the early 1980s may

also be not unrelated to the emergence of a distinct Gothic subculture in Britain at that time) . The Gothic subculture has continued to exist in an essentially similar form for close to two decades making it a remarkably enduring youth subculture . The Gothic subculture is often seen , (see Savage quoted in Chappell (1987)) , as being similar to and to some extent a mutated continuation of two PMC subcultures/countercultures which proceeded it - Hippy and Punk . On a stylistic level this claim has some validity . However both the Counterculture and Punk subculture contained an explicit and foregrounded critique of the status quo - something absent from the Gothic subculture . Philosophically the Gothic subculture is closest to the apolitical , retreatist middle class subcultures such as the European existentialists who existed in the 1950s .

(ii) Size and Make up -The number of people involved in the Gothic subculture in Australia since the late 1970s has waxed and waned . Numbers appears to have risen significantly since the early 1990s possibly due to a revival of the Gothic genre by film makers and the production of films like "Bram Stoker's Dracula" , " Mary Shelley's Frankenstein" , "Interview with a Vampire " , "The Crow " and "Edward Scissorhands " as well as the emergence of a new generation of Gothic artists such Nine Inch Nails and Marilyn Manson . However even at the peaks of it popularity the Gothic subculture has remained small especially when compared to , for example , the Indie and Rave subcultures . Unlike the Indie and Rave subcultures the numbers involved in the subculture are not sufficient to support a large infrastructure devoted to servicing the subculture . There have never been any record labels , venues , weekly newspapers or radio stations

devoted solely to Gothic music in Australia nor has there ever been an Australian Gothic Festival along the lines of the Whitby Festival in England . It is impossible for a band to make a living playing to exclusively Gothic audiences and the number of Gothic bands in Australia has always been small . Major Gothic population centres such as Sydney and Melbourne generally have sufficient numbers to support anywhere between 1-4 'Gothic nights' a week at various clubs and one or two clothing shops stocking Gothic fashion . Given all this it seems unlikely the number of Gothics in Australia much exceeds , at a rough estimate , 10 000 .

The subculture seems to appeal exclusively to well educated , or at least well read , members of the non-corporate fraction of the PMC in possession of abundant cultural capital . Riley (1992:120) has observed of the Melbournian Gothics of the late 1970s -

Everyone assumed the pose of the egocentric art star , actors and poets . . . There was . . . a fantasy of living out a drama of 'art in the making ' . . . as most of the individuals in the scene came from private school backgrounds , all the play acting and the grasping of the mythical dimensions of art and literature movements seemed to have an uncanny naturalness about it . If you didn't know about it already you were about to get a potted knowledge of Romanticism , Verlaine , Rimbaud , Dada , Existentialism , the Surrealists , Picasso and Andy Warhol .

Similarly Fennel (1995:96) has observed of 1990s Australian Gothics -

.

the tribe does seem to attract its fair share of artists and intellectuals . . . the Goths are safe . . . discussing the art of Gustav Klimt , the mind of Carl Jung , the thoughts and images of Piet Mondrian , the literature of Poe , Rimbaud , Baudelaire . . . and . . . the films of Fritz Lang .

The author has found those Gothics he has come in contact with similarly literate .The author has also observed that a large number of Gothics , at least those he has come in contact with , were raised as Catholics .

The effeminate appearance of male Gothics (within traditional gender stereotypes of dress , hairstyle and make-up) and highly sexualised style of female Gothics (i.e the wearing of fetishistic and provocative clothing) may lead the casual observer to believe the subculture provides some sort of haven for those with non-normative sexualities . This does not however appear to be the case . The sexual mores of Gothics do not appear to be much different from those of their non-Gothic peers of a similar age and class background. As with its predecessor Punk , Gothic style seems to be more about distinguishing its members from and perhaps attempting to outrage the more conventionally attired than a straightforward expression of a deviant sexuality . Riley (1992:123) has observed of the Gothic subculture -

The scene . . . was one greatly influenced by the idea of bisexuality ,

although nobody necessarily thought of themselves as such , it sufficed to behave the

manner of an effeminate male . As homosexuality and cross-dressing in general were still

strong taboos in the climate of Australian culture it was an attractive enough pose to

assume . It betrayed a more romantic self perception of the artist at war with the

mediocre outside world into which he didn't fit .

Oakley (1997:4)[6] has observed -

Despite their often androgynous or transvestite appearance , goths have

pretty much the same spread of sexuality as any other similarly aged social group . . .

many goths - particularly heterosexual males - can feel misunderstood when picked upon

just because of their dress , and will take offence from being called 'queer' .

As with the Indie subculture , the majority of active members of the

subculture (i.e those who attend Gothic social events) would seem to be between 16-25

with a smaller proportion of members between 25-35 . The subculture would appear to be

evenly balanced in gender terms . Perhaps due to the style of the subculture , with its

emphasis on a pale appearance , the Gothic subculture in Australia appears to appeal

exclusively to Caucasians (mainly Anglo-Celtics and to a lesser extent and the children and

grandchildren of European migrants) .

(iii) <u>Activities and affective investment of members</u> - The division between a mass of casual fans and a smaller subcultural core of 'true believers' that exists around indie music does not exist around gothic music . Only one Gothic band - The Cure - has ever crossed over into the mainstream in Australia and the songs of this act remain the only gothic music commonly played on Australian commercial radio . Triple J , university and certain community radio stations play some of the more populist and accessible Gothic artists such as Nick Cave , The Cult and The Sisters of Mercy but gothic music as a whole makes up a minuscule proportion of their playlists overall . Like other genres of music such as heavy metal , hardcore ,and rap gothic music tends to generate either a significant degree of affective investment or none at all . While the divide between indie and mainstream music periodically becomes porous and hard to distinguish , the divide between gothic and mainstream music has remained large and generally impermeable . Both gothic music and the Gothic subculture tends to attract intense affective investment or none at all . Those who purchase gothic music and attend Gothic events are usually members of the subculture - there is no diffuse mass of people consuming the music and attending the events on a casual basis without being members of the subculture .

Involvement in the Gothic subculture appears to be a leisure time affair for most of its members . There is no expectation within the subculture that members should 'drop out' and most members of the subculture would like their conventional peers either be involved in education or employment or some combination of both . Unsurprisingly , given the subcultures' intellectual and artistic preoccupations , a large proportion of

Gothics attend or have attended university and/or art college . The dearth of bands playing Gothic music in Australia means attending live performances of music plays a less important role in the Gothic subculture than in the Indie one . Attendance at Gothic nights put on by various clubs where the latest tracks from the U.K , America and Europe are played takes the place of attending live performances of music . Listening to gothic music in a thoughtful attentive manner , either alone or in small groups is common . Like Indie subculturalists , Gothics may congregate together in inner-city share housing but these living arrangements tend not to be communes/collectives of the type experimented with by Counterculturalists .

Like Ferals many Gothics exhibit an interest in various non-mainstream religions . Many Gothics express some interest in Paganism , Wicca , the occult and to a lesser extent Satanism . Although ancient Egyptian religious imagery (notably the Ankh) is common Gothics , do not appear to be interested in ancient Egyptian religion . The importance of these religions does not appear to be particularly important on other than a stylistic level and the Gothic subculture could certainly not be regarded as a religious movement . It seems unlikely more than a small proportion of Gothics are practicing witches or committed Satanists . The majority of Gothics seem to demonstrate only a detached intellectual interest , rather than serious involvement in those non-mainstream religions that have been constructed as evil by Christianity . Oakley[7] (1997:3,4) has argued -

Goth is not a religious . . . nor occult movement . The majority of Goth bands are either non-religious or actively anti-religious . Religious imagery . . . is popular as it conveys the 'darkly powerful' feeling associated with goth music . The number of Pagans is noticeably higher amongst Goths than other similar social groups , this is probably due to a cynicism over organised religions . Goths tend not to want to worship a religion which treats gothdom as 'evil' . Paganism should not be confused with Satanism . . . There are few genuinely Satanist Goths .

(iv) <u>Consciousness of members</u> -

I think our particular sense of humour and way of looking at things has a lot to do with the fact that most of us went to a fairly rich private school (Caulfield Grammar) and that most of us felt fairly misfitted there . I think that that kind of lifestyle is one reason why we have never had , and will never have any desire to make any politically angered statements about anything . They're all totally selfish , personal statements . We were influenced by punk rock , and groups like the Stooges and the Sex Pistols , but it was really the lifestyle and attitude that influenced us .

Nick Cave on The Birthday Party in StJohn (ed)(1985:70)

Exactly what makes an individual an 'authentic' Gothic is a matter of constant debate amongst Gothics both through media such as the internet and zines and in

private discussions . Consensus opinion amongst Gothics indicates that simply adopting the subcultural style is not sufficient and that an individual must possess a certain aesthetic sensibility and philosophical position to be a legitimate Gothic . The following comment by one Gothic is typical -

There is much debate these days about what makes a Goth . . . clothes do not necessarily make the Goth . . . Commodity consumption , the owning of a bomber jacket or a pair of pointy black boots , are not sufficient to give one "street cred " within the subcultural community . Instead . . . being a Goth involves a complex set of lifestyle choices , beliefs and tastes [8].

The authentic aesthetic sensibility involves appreciation of Gothic architecture , various eighteenth and nineteenth century romantic poets and Gothic novelists and their latter-day equivalents such as Anne Rice , horror films - both classic and contemporary and appreciation of gothic music such as that made by Nick Cave , The Sisters of Mercy , The Cult , The Mission , All About Eve , Fields of the Nephilim , Siouxsie And The Banshees and The Cure .

The philosophical position considered to be legitimate by Gothics is as suggested by their self-labelling essentially a dark romantic one .The following comments from Gothics express this bleak worldview -

It seems to a lot of people . . . 'goth' means introspection , morbidity , a love of things bleak even to the point of actual depression and beyond . . . I have only a limited time on this planet ; I am mortal and fragile , and my life span is entirely unpredictable . I am fully aware , at least I believe so , of my own mortality . . . Knowing that any day may be my last , I am determined to - to use a cliche - live life to the full . . . I am a hedonist , and this is exactly what goth means to me [9]

,

I think that people choose to identify with being gothic for a variety of reasons . . . I am introspective , can be extremely depressive and have a love of things dark . My view of the world is seen with a shade of grey and for me , it is lovely . To be able to express that by identification with a subculture and expect I will find others who share a similar view is freeing and makes me feel better than to think I am the only person who feels this way. When I read , listen to or look at pieces of gothic art expressions , they are the things that touch the deepest parts of me . . . the art ,music and literature that I love best I subsequently found was done by other tortured souls . . . I do not put down those who have a happy constitution . . . however I relate more to those who carry this inner sadness with them [10]

and "Since we are all going to die , why continue to struggle ? Gothics choose to embrace the futility of life" [11].

Ability to articulate the dark romantic philosophy amongst Gothics varies according to age , education and intellect but all members profess to share it and identify this worldview as what separates them out from non-members . This essentially apolitical worldview is what differentiates the Gothic subculture from the anarchist/anti-racist/socialist forms of the English punk subculture and the libertarian socialist Counterculture and connects it with the European existentialists , American Beat Buddhists , many cults and the new age movement . Gothics with typical Romantic solipsism perceive themselves as facing a variety of existential , rather than political , problems which require individual existential solutions . Romanticism can be , and has been , intertwined with a left or right politics but the Romanticism practiced by Gothics remains unarticulated to any such politics . Those involved with Factory Records , notably the band Joy Division (latter New Order) , have dabbled with a fascist aesthetic but like punk swastika chic this did not seem to reflect fascist sympathies on either the part of the artists or their fans .

Kavolis's (1993:43-44) comments on Romanticism are apposite . He writes that Romanticism is based on a personal rather than collective -

vision of suffering and fulfilment . The foundational vision of this culture is private in the sense that it arises . . . from an intense preoccupation with the individual's own peculiar brand of unhappiness and salvation quest . These experiences

are then inscribed into the world shared with others in a manner that . . . disregards any of the characteristics of the "objectively " public world that do no fit with the deep personal preoccupations in which the foundational vision is grounded

As the remarks quoted above illustrate , the problem facing the Gothic as s/he sees it is not oppression but depression . Gothics are primarily interested psychological or theological problems , (such as being depressed or unable to effectively communicate with/form relationships with others or existing in a Godless , futile cosmos) , rather than what they see as mundane and irrelevant political issues revolving around distributions of wealth and power . Suffering and discontent are seen to stem from a purely personal cause and thus any solution to such problems will have to be self generated - the public world and one's position within it is largely irrelevant . Gothics like the Romantic poets of the eighteenth and nineteenth century they so admire , wish to transcend rather than transform the world of everyday experience .

As well as not demonstrating the second and third levels of class consciousness Gothics also do not exhibit the first or fourth levels . Gothics do not appear to see their identity as in anyway tied to their structural location and appear to be even further alienated from both the working class and their parent class than Indie subculturalists . With their almost fetishized bohemianism , Gothics distance themselves from all their fellow citizens of all classes . Gothics frequently express contempt for the corporate fraction of their class ('yuppies') and their contempt for the working class

would seem to be more intense than that demonstrated by any other PMC subculture . Gothics perceiving themselves as sensitive aesthetes are appalled at what they see as the unabashedly atavistic philistinism of their working class peers . The exotic and , in the case of males , effeminate style of Gothics frequently attracts the derision of working class youth . Almost all Gothics the author came in contact with had suffered some form of verbal abuse and harassment due to their dress and most expressed a superior contempt for the "yob Australians " unable to comprehend or appreciate their style .

The Gothic style carries no clues to the desired or identified with class location of Gothics . The items making up the style are not identified with any class - at least in twentieth century society . The only group who dress in anyway similar to Gothics are members of the Christian clergy , a group seen to reside outside the productive system and without a clearly identifiable class position . Lacking a class identity , disinterested in the conflict between Capital and Labour and how it affects their own lives as well as the society in which they exist , Gothics also lack any (realistic) vision of an alternative society . Most Gothics are fascinated by long vanished European Medieval societies or parallel extra mundane realities in which all manner of vampires , ghouls , succubi etc roam freely . Such imagined worlds feature strongly in the subculture's music and other art and it appears many Gothics spend a lot of time fantasising about being apart of such worlds - there is even a type of Gothic known as a Medievalist known as such because they dress in medieval style and participate in historical re-enactment societies . Gothics

however do not appear to spend anytime fantasising transforming the society they actually exist in nor do they evidence any interest in social change movements .

Gothic/Dark Romanticism emerged with the birth of modern industrial capitalist society and has periodically reappeared over the last two hundred years in environments encouraging fear , bewilderment and hopelessness amongst the citizenry (or at least a certain section of it - usually the middle or upper class) of a society . Kavolis (1993:91) has observed -

The Romantic moral culture has had its most reliable base in sections of the liberal bourgeoisie , especially in its Protestant-influenced Anglo-Saxon version . . . The Romantic mode of sensibility seems to speak to those who , without being economically deprived , suffer from both social and cultural alienation .

While the non-corporate fraction of the PMC has often been attracted to Romanticism the forms this Romanticism has taken have varied markedly . Gouldner (1970:79-80) identified a form of what he labelled 'Psychedelic Romanticism' informing the Counterculture which emerged at the height of the post war boom arguing -

Modern Psychedelic Romanticism , unlike the earlier version , has emerged in an economy of affluence . . . Psychedelic Culture therefore represents the rejection of success , or at least of a system that has succeeded by its own standards . . .

the middle class is beginning to desert its loyalties to traditional utilitarian culture . . . Insofar as this continues , the rejection of utilitarian culture . . . can no longer be dismissed as the consequence of failure , that is , as a case of sour grapes .

Both the Gothic subculture and Counterculture have drawn their membership from the same class fraction . That affective investments amongst this class fraction moved from an upbeat psychedelic romanticism to a historically more familiar dark romanticism within a matter of years illustrates the dramatic reversal that took place in this class's economic fortunes between the demise of the Counterculture and the birth of the Gothic subculture . As Gouldner indicates the fortunes of the PMC were at their peak during the Counterculture which meant an unusually optimistic , joyful and life affirming form of Romanticism was embraced by Counterculturalists .

At the peak of the post-war boom , members of both fractions of the PMC had the choice to either participate in the labour market and be well rewarded for doing so or live off the considerable surplus of a thriving economy and explore various bohemian lifestyle options . As previously discussed , from the mid 1970s the non-corporate fraction of the PMC has been confronted with a range of economic problems . As with the Gothic literature produced and consumed by the English upper classes after the French and industrial revolutions (see Varma 1957 , Beyer-Berenbaum 1982) the Gothic subculture exists only due to the fear and insecurity being experienced by a particular class . There were artists who articulated a dark romantic philosophy during the boomtime (The Doors

and The Velvet Underground are two obvious examples) but no subculture developed around their music . It was not until the latter half of the Seventies the bleak dark romantic philosophy resonated with a significant number of frustrated and fearful members of the non-corporate fraction of the PMC and a subculture came into being giving a displaced and disguised expression to this group's social and economic anxieties .

The Gothic subculture closely resembles the Heavy Metal one . Both subcultures emerged throughout the Western world after the end of the post war boom in recessionary conditions which were particularly disadvantaging youth . Both heavy metal and gothic music owe something of a debt to late 1960s progressive rock while replacing its exuberance and optimism with despair and often undiluted nihilism . The only major difference between the two genres is that Gothic artists take a more literate ,'high art' approach to their work while Heavy Metal artists , with an often adolescent and overwhelmingly male and working class audience (see Weinstein 1991) , evidence rather less subtlety . Although there is little interaction between the two subcultures and no particular affinity exists between the members of each , the emergence of a PMC subculture so closely resembling a working class one both aesthetically , and more importantly , philosophically lends credence to the theory that the economic changes of recent decades have created a situation whereby youth from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC are finding themselves in a situation similar to their working class peers and responding in a similar manner . Certainly there does not appear to have been any previous

period in which middle and working class youth were simultaneously involved in such similar subcultures [12] .

Gross (1990) and Walser (1993) have observed many heavy metal songs concentrate on the concept of power . In much heavy metal discourse there is a conception that an individuals suffering is due to some outside agency . While not attempting to reduce the genre to its song lyrics , it is significant that many heavy metal songs feature a hero locked in conflict with some form of authority - the opening stanzas from Metallica's massively successful song The Unforgiven (1991) are typical .

New blood joins this earth

and quickly he's subdued

through constant pained disgrace

the young boy learns their rules

With time the child draws in

this whipping boy done wrong

deprived of all his thoughts

the young man struggles on and on he's known

a vow unto his own

that never from this day

his will they'll take away

No such redoubtable oppressive 'them' and prefigurative form of class consciousness can be discerned in Gothic discourse . As in country music , suffering and hardship are typically represented as having personal causes in gothic music rather being the result of a ruling class or its agents . Bayer-Berenbaum (1982) has argued that Gothicism can be seen as a 'decadent' religion - a religion that continues to express the existence of the spiritual but has no belief in a benevolent God . Bayer-Berenbaum was writing in relation to the eighteenth century literary movement but her observation could be seen to apply to the contemporary subculture as well . Gothics have a quasi-religious rather than class-conscious worldview . They do not see the public world and how it is ordered as ultimately having much relevance to , or impact on their lives . Rather Gothics see their lives determined by existing in an apparently meaningless (though perhaps numinous) Cosmos . As one Gothic bluntly summarised "If there is no afterlife at all , life is futile . In which case it is better to embrace it , rather than fool yourself that things are otherwise " [13] .

3. The Feral Subculture.

(i) **Genealogy** - The term Feral , applied to a new generation of youthful , ecologically conscious , drop outs distinct from the hippies/alternative lifestylers of the 1970s , began being used in the mid to late 1980s . Other labels used to describe these 'neo-hippies' in Australia include scrubs , scratchies , scalies , bush punks , bush people , rat people and

crusties but the term Feral has gained the widest usage . As with the Gothic subculture ,
the Feral subculture borrows from both from the Counterculture and Punk subculture
which preceded it . In the Feral subculture , unlike the Gothic subculture , this borrowing
runs deeper than just style with Ferals typically expressing (green) anarchist/libertarian
socialist political viewpoints similar to those expressed by those in the Counterculture and
in sections of the British Punk subculture . Even amongst Ferals themselves there exists
only a vague idea of when and how the Feral subculture came into being . Many nominate
a series of forest blockades that took place in Northern N.S.W in the latter half of the
1980s as the birthplace of the subculture . Ferals exhibit a type of Roussean rustic
Romanticism that has periodically appealed to PMC youth from urban backgrounds over
the last 200 years . The subculture is similar to other groups such as the *Wandervogel* and
more recently parts of the Counterculture , which have retreated to the countryside
seeking some restoration or salvation in nature . The Feral subculture developed
independently of equivalent English subcultures such as the Travellers and Crusties and
the Feral subculture , unlike its Rave and to a lesser extent Gothic and Indie
counterparts , does not appear to look to equivalent foreign subcultures as 'style leaders'
to be emulated .

(ii)<u>Size and makeup</u> - Australian youth appear to have shown considerably less interest in
drop out lifestyles than their British peers . Marshall (1994) estimates there are 60 000
squatters in Britain and 40 000 Travellers . Metcalf cited in Schwartz (1990) estimates
that , at most , 90 000 Australians could be considered to be leading alternative lifestyles .

Only a small percentage - possibly around 10% - of these alternative lifestylers would be Ferals . Doyle (1995) 'guesstimates' the subcultures membership at 10 000 a figure which seems reasonable . It seems highly unlikely the number of Ferals would much exceed 10 000 and the subculture is much less popular than either the Rave or Indie subculture . The subculture's low membership , combined with low incomes and the anti-consumerist ethos of this membership , means that unlike the other subcultures discussed , no real market exists to service the Feral subculture . Unlike other subcultures whose members are fairly evenly distributed across urban Australia Ferals tend to congregate in certain , often relatively undeveloped areas , on what is described by Feral subculturalists as the " migration trail " . A large proportion , probably a majority , of the subculture's membership is concentrated in one geographical area - the 'Rainbow Belt' of Northern N.S.W . Despite the subcultures 'back to nature' ethos there are a significant number of Ferals living in the inner city areas of capital cities . The Feral subculture in terms of the appearance , favoured locations and transient lifestyle of its membership resembles the street kid subculture . Nonetheless it must be noted the two subcultures are distinct from one another . Unlike Ferals , streetkids tend to come from underprivileged backgrounds and do not typically express an interest in green-anarchist politics , environmental activism , indigenous cultures and non-mainstream religions . Both genders appear to be equally represented in the Feral subculture . Ferals range in age from 16-35 .

(iii) **Activities and affective investment of members** -In contrast to other contemporary PMC subcultures participation in the Feral subculture requires a massive affective

investment and is a full time occupation . Ferals are almost all unemployed and uninvolved in or post education . Almost all appear to survive on social welfare payments . Some Ferals live in communes on plots of land but most appear to lead peripatetic lifestyles moving from one gathering , festival and forest blockade to another . Not all Ferals are radical green activists but many are and spend a significant amount of time involved in forest blockades , demonstrations and other forms of environmental activism . Like Gothics , Ferals are interested in non-mainstream religions especially those from indigenous cultures , Celtic paganism and Hinduism . Like others with environmentalist views , Ferals tend towards an animistic worldview . Unlike Gothics , Ferals demonstrate more than a detached intellectual interest in religion , frequently creating and participating in a variety of what they perceive to be religious ceremonies and rituals . Nonetheless , Ferals like their Counterculturalist predecessors are best seen as members of a group with a strong interest in spirituality rather than members of a religious movement . Almost all Ferals profess to be vegetarian and teetotal and are identified as such .

There is no feral genre of music in the sense that there is are indie , gothic and rave genres of music . Ferals listen to a variety of genres of music with perhaps reggae and folk the most favoured . There are only a small number of bands associated with the Feral subculture . Their music is generally a melange of folk , reggae and world music styles . Dance music , of the sort listened to by Ravers is played at the Feral communal dances which are known as Doofs . Frequently living in isolated pre-industrial circumstances Ferals are required to make their own entertainment . Many members drum

and communal drumming sessions are common . Other instruments such as the didgeridu ,

flute , violin and guitar are also popular (see Sherwood 1996) . Fire ceremonies are

popular amongst Ferals with many in the subculture able to eat and breath fire and adept

at twirling flaming batons . Ferals participate in their subcultures cultural production

rather than just passively consuming the work of an elite core of artists . As were working

class communities up until the birth of mass communications , Ferals are in the position of

having to create their own culture . It is interesting , in light of recurrent debates over the

effects of popular culture to note , that Ferals , the contemporary PMC subculturalists

least exposed to mass media , are also the ones most inclined to radicalism .

(iv) <u>Consciousness of members</u> -

Most people think we're kids and we're not kids , we're adults that's

taken a look at society and gone - up yours , we don't want that , there's gotta be some

other way to live with your brothers and sisters , with your family or within your tribal

clan , right in a circle where you can communicate with one another , where you can help

one another and not be put down for it .

Eagle - Feral [14]

They're very concerned with the earth , they're part of that millennium

seekers who sought for happiness , good government and prosperity . . . Ferals are just a

state of the art hippie . . . It's a statement , it's a way of life . They're living out some philosophy or set of principles that they live in relation to the earth .

Bob Hopkins - Hippie , Nimbin identity and observer of the Feral subculture[15]

Feral is a reawakening of our dreaming spirit and people who wanna be feral , it's like maybe they've lived in the city for too long and they wanna shed a whole lot of stuff and shed a whole lot of conditioning and feel the earth like they've forgotten and remember what it is to be alive and what we're really here for which is to dance and make music .

Elen - Feral [16]

A feral is a wild , untamed person , nature worshipper , pagan person . There are a bunch of Ferals living in the forest which call themselves the forest police and do their best to defend mother earth and they're . . . a cross between punk and hippie , it sort of came from hippie-punk the look .

Laylah - Feral [17]

The Feral subculture is unique amongst contemporary Australian youth subcultures in that its membership exhibits a progressive political consciousness opposed to the utilitarian economic rationalist ideology that has reigned triumphant and largely

unchallenged in the post-Whitlam era . The Ferals , at least at present , represent the sole hope for those who hold out hope that youth culture can still potentially act as a resistant counterculture as it did from the late 1960s to early 1970s . The Ferals , as is obvious from the quotes above , are generally seen as the heirs or revivers of the Counterculture and with a number of important exceptions the Ferals do closely resemble their Counterculturalist predecessors . There is little original in the romantic-primitivist views expressed by Ferals - they have had currency at least since Rousseau's 1754 work <u>A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality</u> and more recently were popular within the Counterculture . As did the Counterculturalists before them the Ferals argue that modern industrial society with its attendant materialism , inequality , lack of spirituality , fragmentation , instrumentalism , reductionism , competitiveness , alienation , dehumanising social structures etc , has enslaved and impoverished humankind . The Ferals also argue modern industrial society and the consumer capitalism that is so now so much apart of it is unsustainable and is destroying the environment to the point where lifeforms , including humans , may not be able to survive at all or only with great difficulty . Sherwood (1996:2) has noted the society envisaged by alternative lifestylers would incorporate -

firstly, holism of experience ; secondly , community with its qualities of interrelatedness and co-operation ; thirdly , ecology with its sustainable ethos ; and fourthly , a creative spiritual milieu . Underlying these elements is the recognition that human beings comprise feelings , minds , souls and bodies , and that their well-being

depends on developing cultural forms that nourish all these aspects as well as creating

healthy interrelationships with other human beings and the natural environment .

Ferals , within their own subculture , appear to be attempting to create , on a micro-level , a type of society similar to that Sherwood describes . Ferals certainly like to present their subculture as a co-operative community of individuals with a holistic worldview , living in peace with one another and their environment , exploring their spirituality and creativity .

Ferals , unlike some of their primitivist predecessors , are not retreatists . Like their Countercultural predecessors and unlike their Indie , Gothic and Raver peers Ferals become involved in the political process .

ABANDON STUDIES FOR PROTEST

Students and workers , lay down your tools , defer your studies , take leave of service and

join the planned non-violent forest protest actions ! . . . This is beyond urgent . We have

an ecological disaster of massive proportions unfolding now . . . We believe there are

many young people out there who see their contribution to society as more than simply

earning a pay packet or slavishly holding down a job for the sake of it . . . If wilderness

and old growth forest is to survive . . . the culture of student protest must be revived . . .

We are urging young people to reconsider what is really valuable in Australian society ,

and make a decision for the forests , endangered species , Koori culture and long term water quality . Come prepared for a long and perhaps bitter struggle with loggers and woodchippers .

A proclamation in the newsletter of the North-East Forest Alliance a radical green political group whose membership is largely comprised of Ferals .

They know this system is not going to stand up . It's not going to last . They know the truth but they're stuck and afraid to change because of 'politricks ' . They , (governments) , *feed the fear mentality . They feed everybody fear burgers .*

Reggae Al -Feral[18]

Like most PMC subculturalists/counterculturalists , Ferals are weak on Mann's first level of class consciousness . However like their Countercultural predecessors and unlike members of other contemporary PMC peers , they do exhibit the higher levels of class consciousness . Ferals display the usual vagueness of PMC subculturalists as to their class identity and status within society . Ferals dress in colourful images of stylised poverty - often literally in rags . While Indie style suggests its wearers enjoy restricted material circumstances , Feral style posits them as existing in a form of third world poverty . Ferals appear to see themselves as occupying the status of itinerant outcasts from society but don't seem to see any similarities between people in their position and members of the proletariat and subproletariat . As unapologetically mendicant

welfare recipients , Ferals are estranged from both their parent class and the respectable working class . Ferals appear to have a relatively highly developed understanding of the workings of the capitalist system , albeit one which is unrealistically paranoid in constantly seeing Capital and the State sinisterly conspiring , together and independently , against the best interests of the citizenry and the environment . Unlike their New Left predecessors , Ferals focus primarily on Capitalism's adverse affects on the environment rather than its effects on the capacity of PMC individuals to achieve self fulfilment and self realisation . Even if they lack their Countercultural predecessors' overweening optimism about achieving it , Ferals do have a vision of an environmentally sustainable , low growth , non-consumerist , egalitarian , decentralised socialist/anarchist alternative society and many Ferals are involved radical environmental activism in an attempt to bring about social change . Radical Green Groups such as the North East Forest Alliance and the Wilderness Society have drawn most of their membership from the Feral Subculture .

Though Ferals are often simply viewed as modern day Hippies (see quotes above) there are a number of significant differences between Ferals and Counterculturalists . Firstly the generational consciousness which was so important in the Counterculture is absent from the Feral subculture . Ferals do not see the split between progressive and conservative belief systems as simplistically dividing along generational lines . The Ferals do not appear to see themselves either as de facto members of , or the natural allies of the working class as did New Left activists . The Ferals contempt for the 'redneck' equals if not exceeds that of the Gothic and Indie subculturalists disdain for his

urban peer the 'westie' . In theory a redneck can be anyone with unenlightened , conservative especially anti-environmentalism views , but the term is generally used as shorthand to describe a reactionary working class individual . Unlike members of the other PMC subcultures Ferals often come into conflict , usually heated and sometimes violent , with members of the working class in the form of forestry workers whose activities and hence livelihoods they are determined to bring to an end . In contrast to their New Left predecessors , Ferals hold little hope about the possibility of forging a working alliance with the working class in order to transform society . Union leadership has consistently aligned itself with Capital in fighting against any of the measures proposed by Feral environmental activists . It is at present difficult to see the working class or its representatives being able to work together with Ferals in the way the New Left and Unionists were able to work together in the antiwar movement and green ban campaigns of the 1970s . Ferals are aware that their radical green views are confined to a very small proportion of the population . They do not believe , as the Counterculturalists did , that they will be able to easily affect massive social change . Ferals have contented themselves with the modest goal of attempting preserve as many high conservation value forests as possible and the subculture seems largely devoid of the revolutionary rhetoric common in the Counterculture . Though many are hopeful of educating and raising the consciousnesses of their fellow citizens , few Ferals believe their green-anarchist politics are likely to find mass support amongst either their parent class or the working class at any time in the foreseeable future .

Given this situation , a significant number of Ferals appear to fear an imminent environmental apocalypse in much the same way their 1950s and 1960s counterparts feared a nuclear one . The pessimism characterising the Indie and Gothic subcultures is not entirely absent from the Feral subculture . Asked about his plans for the future one Feral replied " hopefully living a clean , sustainable , tribal lifestyle while I can see the rest of society slowly crumbling into confusion" [19] while another confidently asserted "Feral people know when the system goes we'll be ready " [20] .

4. The Rave Subculture

(i) **Genealogy** - The Rave subculture emerged in Australia circa 1987. It was a swift antipodean reaction to the emergence of the British Rave subculture and the Australian Rave subculture has remained heavily influenced by its British counterpart ever since . The exact genealogy of the British subculture remains open to a variety of interpretations with arguments raging over what were the essential constituents that were necessary in the formation of the subculture and where they came from . Hebdige (1990:52) argues -

Acid House ("Acieed") was the first British youth subculture to have its rhizomatic "roots" directly in mass tourism . It was brought back as a stylistic package by package holiday makers holiday makers returning from Ibiza ("Isle of Love") , the latest product of vacationing British youth and "Continental" beach culture . . .Acieed is

instead the postmodern hyperrealisation of the brochure promises of limitless mobility ,

casual beachware , promiscuous fun : a whole life On The Beach .

Other accounts stress the importance of two American imports to the British Rave subculture firstly the dance music that had been being produced in (frequently gay) clubs in the U.S.A in particular cities such as Chicago and Detroit since circa 1983 and secondly the drug MDMA commonly known as Ecstasy whose long lasting euphoric effects made prolonged (i.e all night dancing) feasible . In that it is a subculture revolving around dancing , whose roots can apparently be traced back to American gay dance clubs , the Rave subculture resembles its disco predecessor but in terms of its exclusivity , the nature of the music , the venues it is played in and its demographic it differs markedly .

(ii) Size and make-up- Since the late 1980s , the Rave subculture has enjoyed massive popularity amongst Australian youth coming close rivalling the much longer established Indie subculture in terms of its appeal and cultural influence . In the late 1980s Dance parties attended by over 10 000 people were not uncommon . Though such huge events have become less common in recent years thousands of individuals (at least) still attend dance parties every week in Australia . The large membership of the subculture is not however due to the subculture having any obvious working class appeal . Historically , youth subcultures revolving around dancing have seen to be the province of disadvantaged or working class youth - Black and Latino youth in the U.S.A (such as the Zoot suiters) and working class youth in the U.K (such as the Mods and Northern Soul fans) .

However the Rave subculture in Australia would appear to appeal to , and be financially accessible to , only PMC youth . Unlike many other subcultures , purchasing records is not considered an important activity but the cost of participating in other subcultural activities is prohibitive . At the time of writing , Raves and Dance Parties cost an average of $40 and can cost anywhere up to $75 . Ecstasy , the drug most commonly consumed by members of the subculture , sells for $60 a dose and it is not uncommon for users - especially experienced users , to consume anywhere up to three doses in one session[21] . Expenditure on clothes is to some extent a matter of choice but there is an emphasis within the subculture on dressing stylishly and it is not uncommon for Ravers to spend hundreds of dollars on outfits . Murphie and Scheer (1992) note of Australian dance parties " it nearly always cost a lot to get through the door . This (and the price of drugs) tended to bar the dance party from anyone but the middle class " . The high costs of participation in the subculture's activities mitigates against anyone without a high disposable income becoming a member . Ravers tend to either be in possession of full time employment or the offspring of affluent PMC parents . The reason for the subculture's large membership would appear to be not that it has mass appeal but that it manages , in a way the Gothic , Indie and Feral subcultures do not , to simultaneously appeal to youth from both the corporate and non-corporate fractions of the PMC .

Another reason for the subcultures large membership lies in its appeal to under 18s . Dance Parties are not , unlike Indie gigs and Gothic nights , held on licensed premises and there are no barriers (barring the cost of the event and/or parental

restrictions) to adolescents attending . Dance Parties and Raves , being generally alcohol free and peaceful events , also provide an attractively safe environment in which individuals as young as thirteen can socialise . A sizeable proportion of the subcultures members are between the ages of 14-18 and this adolescent grouping is so numerous there has developed a term for them - "Baby Ravers " . Overall the majority of Ravers appear to be between the ages of 14-30 . The subculture appears to be much less dominated by Anglo-Celts than the Gothic , Indie or Feral subcultures with non-Anglo-Celts constituting a sizeable proportion of the subcultures membership if still being in a minority . Like its predecessor Disco , Rave subculture is locked in a symbiotic relationship with the gay and lesbian subculture . While a large proportion of gay and lesbians attend dance parties and clubs the anecdotal evidence suggests that the majority of those in the Rave subculture identify as heterosexual .

(iii) <u>Activities and affective investments of members</u> - As with the Indie subculture , there are a significant number of people who may occasionally attend one of the Rave subculture's events without considering themselves to be part of the subculture . However most of those who attend Raves or Dance parties on a regular basis typically do consider themselves as part of a subculture . Though its members affective investments may be just as intense as those found in other subcultures , it must be noted that involvement in the Rave subculture does not , unlike many subcultures , involve distancing oneself from 'mainstream ' society and thus forfeiting some status or opportunities one might otherwise have enjoyed . Ravers are not expected to drop out like Ferals nor make their appearance

confronting like Gothics . As Murphie and Scheer observe (1992:179) "dance culture" is "a weekend lifestyle " . The anti-careerist and anti-corporate rhetoric found in other PMC youth subcultures is largely absent from the Rave subculture nor is there any suggestion that a successful high status , well paying career is incompatible with being an authentic member of the subculture . The subculture revolves exclusively around dancing at Dance Parties , Raves or a select circuit of clubs .

(iv)Consciousness of members -

a rave is a social event , a phenomenon of modern youth culture . In most cases a rave is a dance party in which the participants experience a sense of community and elevated consciousness through the hearing of music and the responding to music through (1) free physical motion or dance , (2) a positive change of mood , and (3) both spoken and unspoken interaction with other participants . . . Ravers have diverse tastes in music , political viewpoints , personal histories , and attitudes towards the consumption of food and drugs . Assume nothing about Ravers except that they intend to have a good time

Mike Brown - Raver[22]

The Rave or Dance Party is the central event and defining feature of the Rave subculture . Being a Raver is as suggested by the subcultures self - labelling all about attending Raves - all night events generally held in large spaces and attended by a large

number of people (anywhere between 1000-10 000) at which fast paced (i.e 116- 160 bpm) electronic music is played and individuals engage in energetic dancing alone , with a partner or in a group for prolonged periods of time - not uncommonly all night (with periodic rest breaks) . Ravers frequently report a sense of elevated consciousness occurring at these events which would appear to be due to some combination of the frenetic/hypnotic/uplifting nature of techno music , psychedelic visuals and light shows , prolonged physical exertion and drug use . Ravers also frequently report they feel a sense of unity with their fellow dancers , indeed the mark of a good Rave is seen to be that it possess 'The Vibe' a sense that all those attending are part of a community united in experiencing a shared joyous experience . Many Ravers argue that a Rave is a type of modern day religious ceremony with the DJ acting as the Shaman/Priest . The following is a typical representation of this viewpoint -

The actual concepts of raves is not new - it is as old as time itself . At the base level , raves are very comparable to American Indian religious ceremonies . . . where music is the key towards pulling oneself into a unique emotional and psychological state . . . The hypnotizing effect of techno music coupled with the seamless transitions and thematic progressions of Rave DJ's as the night progresses can be quite intoxicating , resulting in what could be closely compared to a religious experience [23].

While there exists a consensus amongst Ravers and observers of the subculture that those attending Raves typically experience some sort of altered

consciousness and sense of community , the political implications of this are a matter of debate . Some within the subculture contend that it is a counterculture .The Rave subculture has borrowed heavily from the Counterculture - reviving its clothing style , making use of its psychedelic light shows at Raves , replicating its interest in consciousness altering drugs , even having its own "Summer of Love " two decades after the original one . Some within the subculture argue , as did their Countercultural predecessors , that they are at the forefront of a consciousness/spiritual revolution which will change the world . The following is typical of some Ravers millenarian fervour -

Just as many in the metaphysical community recognize and advocate a paradigm shift - a revolution in consciousness - so do many ravers . The energy manifest at Raves embodies both destruction and recreation : destruction of old belief systems , of our collective belief in the social and cultural forces that control us ; and recreation of personal liberty , of our collective liberty and right to be freely ourselves . The Rave phenomenon has become an unexpected magnet for and magnifier of such psychic energy , expressed in terms overtly evoking spiritual values , often with a Pagan or Gaian "Earth Magick" flavour [24] .

Somewhat more prosaically , many Ravers claim to hold the PLUR philosophy - PLUR being a acronym for Peace , Love , Unity and Respect . What the PLUR philosophy translates to in practice seems to amount to being friendly and

considerate towards other members of the subculture and to all others one comes in contact with . Some believe this attitude alone will affect social change -

Some ravers are so committed to PLUR and the rave scene that they believe raves are instruments of social change . They believe the positive effects of raving are spreading into the lives of all involved , and in turn the people who come in contact with ravers are also affected in a positive manner .[25]

Most Ravers do not believe that the subculture is a revolutionary force destined to bring about a paradigm shift - rather they just see it as just a form of hedonistic escapism . The available empirical evidence at least in the Australian context favours this more sober school of thought . A fan of techno music has written -

This music wants to let you leave the club and get along with your life , look it in the eye and come back empowered , inspired , willing to envision and work for change. For this it builds coalitions across various sounds and populations[26] .

This may or may not be true in other societies but there is no evidence to support this assertion in Australia . Ravers may or may not achieve some sort of personal enlightenment and empowerment from involvement in the Rave subculture but they do not "build coalitions " or "work for change". Whatever the other similarities between them , Rave subculturalists do not exhibit any of the political activism of their

Countercultural predecessors . There is no articulation between the Rave subculture and progressive politics even of the weak form found in the Indie subculture . For example Australian Ravers do not participate 'Benefit Raves' for progressive causes the way Indie subculturalist frequently participate in 'Benefit Gigs '.

Even within the subculture , the claims of some of its champions seem exaggerated . Much is made of the subculture being an inclusive community while within the subculture elitism appears to be rampant . On a basic level , as Murphie and Scheer (1992:179) note the subculture remains inaccessible to the mass of people with participation limited to "those wealthy enough to participate in buying the clothes , drugs and entry to the clubs " . Few in the Rave subculture seem concerned by the overwhelming PMC support base and its lack of accessibility . On the contrary , regardless of their PLUR philosophy , many in the subculture demonstrate exactly the same type of anti-working class prejudices as other members of their parent class . Murphie and Scheer (1992:176,178) note that "the dance party . . .tended to exclude people from the Western Suburbs " and that these people "were regarded as dangerous to mix with (read unfashionable) by the inner city dance crowd " . Many Raves promote themselves not as community events but exercises in exclusivity - promising that the insufficiently stylish will be denied entry . Murphie and Scheer (1992) detail the lengths one promoter catering to an elite within the subculture went to prevent this elite having to come in contact with non-elite members of the subculture - smaller events were advertised by word of mouth or

private mailing lists while at a large event a special segregated area was set aside for this

elite so they would not have to endure occupying the same space as their inferiors .

Ravers do not score highly on Mann's class consciousness index . Like the

other PMC subculturalists discussed , Ravers do not think of themselves as belonging to a

particular class . Raver style , though it frequently incorporates expensive items , has no

clear class connotations . Rave styles revolves around items which are either sexually

provocative (though not to the point of suggesting some serious deviance such as bondage

wear) , whimsically kitsch or functional for dancing . The style does not involve any

permanent or semi-permanent features such as unusual hair styles/colourings , tattoos ,

facial hair etc which suggest disaffiliation from the 'respectable' corporate fraction of the

PMC and its lifestyle . As noted above , unlike other PMC subcultures, the Rave

subculture attracts a significant amount of support from the corporate fraction of the

PMC . The subculture appears to attract a significant number of students destined for

high-paid employment in the core labour market (such as economics/commerce

students)[27] as well as a large number under 35s working in advertising , marketing ,

finance and business services and the fashion industry . The strong representation of those

in a relatively privileged position who are typically uninterested in or antipathetic towards

Left politics is presumably a factor in the subcultures non-articulation to such politics .

As to Mann's secondary and tertiary levels , Ravers seem either take an

unorthodox approach to , or are utterly disinterested in , the public world and political

issues . Ravers might be divided into two camps - the unapologetic escapists and the counterculturalist idealists . The former , who are in the majority , are simply apolitical . Much in the subculture seems to be designed to appeal to this group . Though it is difficult to generalise it can be reasonably confidently stated that the seemingly endless subgenres of techno music consumed by Ravers have two features in common - firstly the music is upbeat , designed to excite and uplift the listener and secondly lyrics are either absent or lightweight and joyous . Minimal social commentary is possible in such a format . The events where this music is played have names such as "Smile" , "Fun" , "Delirium" and "Bacchanalia" and for a long time , the movements emblem was the smiley face symbol . Almost everything about Raves , from the other worldly light show , to the use of drugs such as MDMA and LSD , to music lacking any linear narrative or direction and generally lyrics is designed to encourage Ravers to forget the actually existing world and reach an elevated state of consciousness where they have in fact forgotten or ceased to care about any troubling features of either their own lives or the society in which they exist . Escapist Ravers do not attribute any political significance to their actions or their subculture and are likely to take the view that , as one Raver put it , Raves are simply "escapes - weekend excursions - from otherwise stressful or mundane school and home lives "[28] .

However for the small minority of counterculturalist idealist Ravers , "raving represents a hopeful vision of what might ultimately be possible for the future of mankind "[29] . These Ravers seem to believe that the Rave subculture is going to be instrumental in ushering in a much improved society . Exactly what the nature of this

society would be is rarely made clear . Given Ravers frequent boasting over the multicultural nature of Raves - i.e the supposed coming together of heterosexual and homosexuals and individuals from a variety of different ethnicities in an (albeit temporary) community ; Ravers presumably envisage this society as one free from racism and homophobia . Given the subculture's PLUR slogan it would also presumably involve the creation of a conflict free , unified community . The vision seems more millenarian than political . Certainly Ravers do not appear to believe the causes of the flaws (such as a lack of community) of the society they presently inhabit are a result of the capitalist economic system nor do they appear to believe that the utopic society they envisage will emerge following the triumph of Labour over Capital . Rather it seems that countercultural idealist Ravers believe an improved society will simply come into being as greater and greater numbers of people attend Raves , experience an elevated consciousness and sense of community and as a result adopt and live out the PLUR philosophy . Like those in the New Age movement , Ravers appear to believe that beneficial social change will arise primarily from individuals changing their consciousnesses rather than orthodox political activism aimed at redistributing power and wealth . It seems likely that the idealist and escapist Ravers are split along class lines with those enjoying high status , well renumerated employment or the prospect of it upon graduation seeing raving as no more than a highly enjoyable form of hedonism to be indulged during their leisure time , with those from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC more inclined to attempt to see the subculture as some sort of counterculture capable of affecting social change .

Pace the countercultural proselytising of a small minority of its members ,

the Rave subculture , at least in the highly commercial form it has developed in Australia ,

represents the Indie subculture's Other counterposing to that subculture's confused

disaffection a determined happiness . If the Indie subculture is , as Reynolds (1986) has

claimed , a haven for those exiled from a performativity-obsessed , athletically humanist

health and efficiency culture - all those recalcitrants who "fail to have sex/fun/ style"

(Reynolds 1986:254) then the Rave subculture provides for all those who insist on having

sex/fun/style . Redhead (1990:2) has described the British acid house phenomenon as "the

logic of consumerism writ large . A mainly middle-class Dionysian culture , abandoning

(that is , spending) and offering itself to the market " . Extending Redhead's idea it might

argued that Ravers rather than being in anyway disaffiliated from their host society are in

fact the model citizens of a post-ideological , repressively desublimated consumerist

society .

5. The myth of Generation X .

The 20-something generation is apparently obsessed with the "grunge

phenomena" , self-mutilation , Kurt Cobain's suicide and the painfully thin Kate Moss .

Painted as apathetic , overeducated and underemployed , Gen-X members are reduced to

meaningless rebels , bohemian try-hards .

Sydney Morning Herald (12/8/95)[30]

Mannheim (1952) distinguished between generational location , actuality and units . Generational location refers to the common location in society of all the members of a particular age group . Generational actuality refers to the possibility of the members of a generational location sharing a common project . A generation unit is a coherent concrete group of people sharing a generational location in which exists "an identity of response , a certain affinity in the way all move with and are formed by their common experiences " Mannheim (1952:306) - in other words a generational consciousness as the term is commonly used . Mannheim argued that during periods of accelerated social change generational consciousness could develop amongst a specific concrete group or groups . It was possible that this generational consciousness could spread from its group(s) of origin to others inhabiting the same generational location (but perhaps a different class) who find a "satisfying expression of their location " Mannheim (1952:307) in such a consciousness . Mannheim , it should be noted , did acknowledge the importance of class arguing that "within each generational location can exist a number of differentiated , antagonistic generation units " Mannheim (1952:306) .

The social and economic changes of the last two decades mean contemporary PMC and working class youth share remarkably similar circumstances . As has been frequently observed (see for example (S) Willis 1993) , the growth of a post-industrial service sector , globalisation and stalled economic growth has throughout the Western world led to the collapse of old distinctions between the PMC and working class . This has been especially true of Australia since 1983 where a social democratic

government embraced economic rationalist policies which made the PMC less prosperous and more insecure while massively increasing welfare spending targeted at the working class . Now the majority of students from both classes complete their secondary education and many go onto achieve post school qualifications at TAFEs , colleges and universities educational distinctions between the classes have been eroded . Now unemployment , underemployment and job insecurity have become issues for the PMC distinctions based on work situation have also to an extent disappeared . Today's young , working or middle class , entering a post-industrial job market with a high youth unemployment rate where the majority of jobs available are low wage ones in the service sector , are confronted with far different prospects than those of their parents who came of age in the boom years .

The term "Generation X" was first applied to the baby boomers serving as the title of 1964 compilation of interviews with Mods and Rockers by Deverson and Hamblett . In 1977 Billy Idol and Tony James formed a band called Generation X presumably suggesting they and their audience were part of it . By the early 1990s the term was again in use to describe youth but , unlike the previous two occasions , it became widely used especially amongst journalists reporting on youth and/or popular culture . The almost simultaneous emergence of novelist Douglas Coupland's (1992) Generation X : Tales for an Accelerated Culture and a particular genre of commercially successful indie music (i.e grunge) did much to aid in the popularisation of the term . Strictly speaking only

those born between 1960 - 1973 qualify as members of Generation X but , in practice , the term is generally used to apply to any born since the 1945 - 60 baby boom period .

Despite the emergence of conditions that would seem to encourage it , a generational consciousness does not , contrary to what might be assumed from media reports , appear to have emerged amongst any youthful generational unit . Despite increasingly common life experiences clear class divisions remain amongst contemporary youth .Youth subcultures even when similar ones , such as the Gothic and Heavy Metal , draw their membership primarily from one class location rather than attracting a cross class membership . PMC subculturalists display marked class prejudice frequently expressing contemptuous attitudes towards their working class peers . It seems likely that working class subculturalists are similarly suspicious of and unimpressed by their PMC peers . Certainly there have been no instances of a PMC and working class subculture interacting with each other in the way the Hell's Angels and Counterculture did in the U.S.A between 1965 -1969 (see Thompson 1966) . Relations between between PMC and working class subcultures are rarely violent but neither are they cordial . It seems highly unlikely that PMC and working class youth perceive themselves to be sharing a common youth culture , lifestyle or oppression .

That working class and PMC youth , despite increasingly similar life chances and material circumstances , lack "a certain affinity " is not surprising - examples of a common generation consciousness overriding class consciousness are rare . What is

more noteworthy is that a generational consciousness has not come into being even amongst that group most predisposed to exhibit it - youth from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC . Both the *Wandervogel* who excited Mannheim's interest and the Counterculturalists , who formed generational units exhibiting a very clear generational consciousness , were from the same class fraction as Indie , Gothic , Raver and Feral subculturalists none of whom appear to exhibit any significant generational consciousness . It is typically Anglo-Celtic PMC youth , especially those involved in subcultures , rather than working class , ethnic or conformist youth who are typically being referred to when the concept of Generation X is deployed . However PMC subculturalists exhibit as little generational consciousness as any other group within the generational location . While the Counterculture's membership was highly concentrated amongst those of university age , contemporary PMC subcultures draw their membership from a slightly wider age range - those in the 18-22 age group still predominate but there a significant numbers of members from both older and younger age groups involved . More importantly it is not assumed by members of the subculture that subcultural membership is articulated to age . Rather it is frequently stated that individuals of any age , provided they possess the correct belief system , can be fully legitimate members of the subculture . Nor do PMC subculturalists appear to believe that younger individuals will automatically be sympathetic to their subculture while older ones will be antipathetic . As previously discussed Indie , Gothic and Feral subculturalists direct their animosity not towards members of the preceding generation but to those in a different class locations - i.e members of the corporate fraction of their own class and the working class . They do not see themselves as part of

one generation locked in conflict with another . 'Generation X' is yet to actually develop a

generational consciousness .

6. Differing Subcultural Responses .

Whether that is the intention of the authors or not , the impression gained

from reading classic CCCS texts such as <u>Resistance through Rituals</u> (1976) and

<u>Subculture : The Meaning of Style</u> (1979) is that a sole subcultural response or "magic

resolution" appropriate for every structural location at every point in time . Thus CCCS

writers typically argue that different subcultures existing at the same time were serving

those in different structural locations . Alternatively , a change in the subcultural loyalties

of those in a particular structural location was seen to be the result of changed economic ,

social and political circumstances for those in such a location . Thus , for example ,

Hebdige (1976,1979) argues that whilst both Mods and Rockers were working class they

were from different fractions of the working class and the two subcultures offered

different solutions to the different problematics faced by blue collar manual workers as

opposed to low level white collar ones . To take another example , both Clarke (1976)

and Hebdige (1979) argue that those in a certain structural location from circa 1966

began to shift their affective investment from the Mod to the very different Skinhead

subculture as a result of different pressures and influences coming to bear on those in that

structural location from the mid 1960s onwards .

The CCCS writers' belief in the existence of simple and unproblematic homologies between certain structural locations and subcultures has come in for much criticism (see Harris 1992 , Middleton 1990 , Tait 1993) . The situation may or may not have been more straightforward in the U.K during the 1950s and 1960s but , since at least the advent of Punk , attempting to draw simple homologies between those in a certain structural location and a particular subculture has been problematic .It has become obvious that very different subcultures can appeal simultaneously to those occupying the same structural location , the same subculture can appeal to those in different locations and as is increasingly occurring a subculture can be revived in conditions very different from those it emerged in .Thus , for example , white PMC American youth can be anarchist Punks , neo-Hippies or fascist Skinheads (Willis 1993) whilst the skinhead culture can simultaneously appeal to working class British youth , PMC as well as white and black working class youth in the U.S.A (Hamm 1993 and Willis 1993) and the offspring of working class English immigrants in Australia (Moore 1994) . Hebdige (1979) himself observed a second coming of the Teddy Boy subculture in the later half of the 1970s in conditions very different to those in which the subculture had first emerged in the early to mid 1950s . The early 1990s saw a similar phenomenon when , following the crossover success of grunge music and the emergence and commercial success of neo-Punk acts like Greenday and Offspring , significant numbers of PMC American youth began to adopt a punk style pioneered fifteen years previously across the Atlantic by individuals occupying a different structural location in a much different society .

While the situation may not be as unproblematic as it was presented by CCCS writers it can still be argued , at least in relation to recent Australian experience , that subcultures do tend to draw their membership primarily from a particular class , or more specifically , a particular class fraction . Subcultures revolving around high performance cars , motorcycles and listening to heavy metal music draw their membership largely from the working class , just as the Indie , Feral and Gothic subcultures draw their membership from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC . Rave is exceptional in managing to attract membership from both the corporate and non-corporate fraction of the PMC . However it must be noted that those in any one structural location can and do opt for a wide variety of subcultures . Why an individual from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC should choose a green-anarchist subculture over a dark romantic one or indeed become involved in a subculture at all when the majority of his/her peers don't remains a complex question . While certain distinct features can be noted about the membership of some subcultures (for example the author found an apparent preponderance of ex-Catholics in the Gothic subculture) , overall these differences hardly seem significant enough to explain differing subcultural investments by similarly located individuals . The family background , social network and temperament of an individual would appear to play a significant role in whether or not they become involved in a subculture and what type of subculture they choose to become involved in. Certainly many subculturalists report feeling maladapted to 'normal' society . Many also report having felt misfitted as a child and unable to establish relationships with their peers due to what they perceived as their difference from them . However subcultural analysts have

been reluctant to stray from a strictly sociological perspective . It seems unlikely that any satisfactory insight into diverse subcultural choices amongst similarly located individuals can be produced with existing narrowly sociological methodologies .

7. Contemporary PMC subcultures .

PMC subcultures which have emerged since 1975 share many characteristics with their predecessors that existed during the boom period between 1950-1975 but also differ in certain respects . As with previous PMC subcultures , the inner city areas of capital cities generally provide the sites for the subcultural events participated in by Ravers , Gothics , Indie subculturalists and urban dwelling Ferals . Those members of the subculture not residing with their parents also frequently live in such areas alongside various outgroups . As with their predecessors , contemporary PMC youth's involvement in subcultures is far from ephemeral . Membership spanning five years or more - typically from the mid to late teens to the mid to late twenties - is common amongst contemporary PMC subculturalists . Contemporary PMC subculturalists like their predecessors do not , apart from illicit drug use , tend to typically engage in any form of criminality . PMC subculturalists do not commonly engage in violence either against fellow members , members of other subcultures or members of ethnic , religious or sexual minorities . Like their predecessors and unlike their working class peers , contemporary PMC subculturalists do not typically participate in 'compensatory ' activities such as physical violence or reconstructing , riding and racing motor vehicles in an attempt to achieve a

sense of mastery , control , status and power unavailable from other sources . As it has been in previous cases , the PMC value of individualism is clearly apparent in contemporary PMC subcultures which lack the tight gang structure and emphasis on group loyalty of many of their working class counterparts . In contrast to many working class subcultures , women are fairly equally represented amongst contemporary PMC subculture's membership and participate on a relatively equal basis in subcultures with their male counterparts (See (S) Willis 1993) .

Whatever the similarities with their predecessors , contemporary PMC subcultures also contain significant differences . Contemporary PMC subcultures have not created alternative versions of dominant institutions in the way the Counterculture did with free universities , schools , stores , health and legal aid centres , an underground press etc . Contemporary PMC subculturalists , with the exception of Ferals , like their working class counterparts and unlike their predecessors , clearly divide their non leisure and leisure time and regard their subcultural involvement as primarily a leisure time affair . They do not attempt to fuse work and leisure . They do not typically drop out but remain involved in higher education and employment . Disaffiliation tends to remain contained at a stylistic and attitudinal level rather than reaching the level of complete self exile from mainstream society . Most significantly , contemporary PMC subcultures , with the exception of the Ferals , do not take the overtly oppositional and political form supposedly characteristic of such subcultures .

While members of PMC subculture may talk about being part of an alternative scene it is important to note that the various contemporary PMC subcultures are not articulated together in some sort of unified counterculture in the way various groups cohered together in the Counterculture of the late 1960s/ early 1970s . PMC subculturalists do not appear to feel any particular affinity with the members of other PMC subcultures or believe they share a common worldview , belief system or purpose [31] . The only site at which members of the various PMC subcultures interact is at a variety of Festivals which have become increasingly numerous and popular since the late 1980s . Events such as the Livid festival , the Woodford-Maleny Folk festival , the Byron Bay Arts and Music festival and The Big Day Out are all successful at attracting attendance from the membership of a variety PMC subcultures . These post-Woodstock events often attract excited commentary suggesting they have a political significance . The following written by Casimir (1995:14) about the largest and most commercially successful of the Festivals is typical -

The Big Day Out is now a festival of the counter culture , a gathering of the tribes , of all those teens and twentysomethings (did someone say Xers?) who see themselves as somehow spiritually or philosophically outside the mainstream .

The Big Day Out and festivals like it may constitute a gathering of the tribes but they are not festivals of a counterculture simply because there is no counterculture (other than that temporarily assembled in such locations) . Unless one is

willing to argue that there is something innately oppositional/subversive about a large group of youth gathering together to watch a series of musical performances over an extended period of time , it is difficult to discern the political significance in Festivals their champions argue , without any empirical evidence , is there .

The 1973 Aquarius Arts festival , (Douglas and Geeves 1992:104) observe , " aimed to set out the alternative lifestyle movement in all its variety " and generate " a permanent community from the roots of the very festival itself "[32] . It is hard to imagine any contemporary festival setting such ambitious aims . The difference between the Aquarius Arts festival and , for example its closest contemporary equivalent , The Big Day Out demonstrates the difference between contemporary PMC subculturalists and their Countercultural predecessors . The Counterculturalists who created and participated in the Aquarius Art Festival desired social change and believed it was possible - a belief that found expression in their Festival . Their PMC successors in contrast , largely devoid of the beliefs and hopes of their predecessors , expect and receive no more than enjoyable entertainment at the Festivals they attend .

ENDNOTES

---

[1] Indie music defined and discussed in detail latter in chapter .

[2] Low income housing around Sydney is most densely concentrated in the Western Suburbs . 'Westie' is slang for a resident of the Western suburbs who , according to the stereotype , is an proletarian philistine .

[3] The Concept of Generation X is discussed latter in chapter .

[4] See for example (unattributed) <u>Sydney Morning Herald</u> articles "300 000 March Against the Bomb" (1/4/85:1) ; "Peter Garrett Still Rocks Electoral System " (1/3/86:3); "Ballad of unfinished business " (27/1090:80) .

[5] This is not to suggest there has never been any type of linkage - a number of bands have been and are involved in the pro-Aboriginal rights cause for example . However in the authors opinion at least , the type of political engagement of indie artists which has periodically occurred in the U.K (e.g the Rock against Racism and Red Wedge campaigns) has no parallel in Australia .

[6] Oakley , A <u>U.K . People . Gothic - Frequently Asked Questions List with Answers</u> at

<http://www.cimmerii.demon.co.uk/misc/upgfaq.txt> (1997)

[7] Oakley , A (1997) ibid

[8] Gochenour , P <u>Power , Posers , and Pretty Things - Goth Androgyny and Exceeding the</u>

<u>Sign</u> at <http://tswww.cc.emory.edu/~pgochen/X0006_Goth_Androgyny_copy.html>

[9] Clegg , A in a newsgroup devoted to a discussion of "How I view the 'goth ethic' " at

<http://www.omen.com.au/`synic/goth/arc/gothethi.htm> (10/8/1996)

[10] Kardell , K in the "How I view the 'goth ethic' " newsgroup (ibid)

[11] "Tellessa"on <u>Tellessa's Gothic Page</u> at

<http://www.powerup.com.au/`Imccaule/gothic/ spooky.htm>

[12] 'Satanic' heavy rock music has , in the U.S.A been under attack from conservatives

and the subject of several moral panics since at least the early 1980s (see Walser (1993) or

Weinstein (1991) for an account of the political and other battles surrounding Heavy

Metal) . It seems that this type of music is now perhaps the only form of (white) rock

music perceived as truly threatening and subversive by the moral majority in the U.S.A .

Certainly it is this genre which has , along with Rap , been subject to the most enthusiastic

scrutiny and attack from conservative forces in the U.S.A . Probably due to the lack of a

conservative Christian political force in this country equivalent to that which exists in the

U.S.A neither Heavy Metal nor Gothic music nor the subcultures coalescing around them

have been the subject of moral panics or political attacks in Australia .

[13] "Tellessa" ibid

[14] Bellamy , J (1993) Interview with Eagle carried out during the making of a student

documentary on the Feral Subculture .

[15] Bellamy , J (1993) Interview with Bob Hopkins carried out during the making of a

student documentary on the Feral subculture .

[16] Bellamy , J (1993) Interview with Elen carried out during making of student

documentary on the Feral subculture .

[17] Bellamy , J (1993) Interview with Laylah carried out during making of student

documentary on the Feral subculture .

[18] in Murray , M (1994) "Ferals : The call of the wild" Simply Living June 1994

[19] Bellamy , J (1993) Interview with Irish carried out during the making of student documentary on the Feral subculture .

[20] Bellamy , J (1993) Interview with Eagle (ibid)

[21] Other drugs commonly consumed by Ravers such as LSD and various types of amphetamines are somewhat less costly but not inexpensive .

[22] Mike Brown Techno Music and Raves FAQ at

<http://www. hyperreal. com/~mike/pub/altraveFAQ.html#definition> (1995)

[23] Hilker , C The Official alt.rave FAQ at

<http://www.hyperreal.com/raves/altrave FAQ.html> (1994)

[24] Baisden , G and Swanlund , A "Stark Raving Seattle - How the'Rave Scene' Brings Neo-Pagan Values to Generation X " in Music Blend Magazine Issue #48 at

<http://www.eden.com/'magical/48/rave.html>

[25] Mike Brown (1995) ibid

[26] Lopez , A Techno music as a subculture at

http://squishy.com/raves/ spirit/ technoshamanism/Techno_Subculture.html (1994)

[27] Burke (1995a) in her examination of the Sydney Rave subculture "Live too fast , fly too high" in the <u>Sydney Morning Herald</u> (30/10/95) emphasises the appeal of the subculture to those with high disposable incomes . The two university students interviewed in her article were not studying Arts courses but rather Economics and Architecture and destined high paid employment in the core labour market .Burke was not conducting a scientific study and it would be foolish to read to much in to a sample of two individuals . Nonetheless it seems unlikely Burke would have happened upon University students enrolled in degrees with such a high market value had she been examining the Indie , Gothic or Feral subcultures .

[28] Mike Brown (1995) ibid

[29] from <u>The Spirit of Raving</u> at <http://hyperreal.com/raves/spirit/>

[30] Burke , A (1995b) "Club Twenty-something " in the <u>Sydney Morning Herald</u> (12/8)

[31] Several writers (see Thorne (1993) , Marshall (1994) and Turner (1995))have argued that in the early 1990s in Britain Ravers , Crusties and Travellers , who were all facing a common police harassment and political mobilisation against their subcultures , began to intermingle to a far greater degree than had previously been the case and indeed coalesce into some type of unified counterculture . No such phenomenon has taken place in

Australia . Australian Ferals have enthusiastically borrowed from the Rave subculture embracing dance music and putting on their own versions of dance parties called Doofs (see Cole and Hannan 1997) , however as far as the author can ascertain , there has been no significant coalescing of the drop out Feral subculture and the Rave subculture nor does any such syncretism seem feasible given the divergent characters of the two subcultures .

[32] The festival of course achieved this objective transforming Nimbin from a quiet , conservative rural area to an epicentre of the alternative lifestyle movement as Hippies stayed or , arrived in , the area following the festival .

CHAPTER FOUR

Oppositionality in Contemporary Australian PMC Subculture

1.Hegemony - the pre-post modern perspective .

Surveying the varied work that has been undertaken on youth subcultures since the 1930s Brake (1985:ix) has observed -

One major theme which is noticeable is that if the young are not socialised into conventional political , ethical and moral outlooks , if they are not programmed into regular work habits and labour discipline , then society as it is today cannot continue .

The prospect of unconventional youth challenging the status quo has periodically alarmed conservatives and excited radicals . The CCCS were notoriously excited by the oppositionality they believed was evident in youth subcultures . In the key essay of Resistance through Rituals "Subcultures , Cultures and Class " Clarke et al (1976) argue that youth subcultures grow out of the conflict between the (subordinate) working class fighting to become class conscious and a (dominant) ruling class struggling to maintain hegemony . In typically stirring language Clarke at al (1976:44) claim -

Negotiation , resistance , struggle : the relations between a subordinate and a dominant culture , wherever they fall within this spectrum , are always intensely active , always oppositional . . . The subordinate class brings to this 'theatre of struggle ' a repertoire of strategies and responses .

Subcultures are one of the oppositional strategies/responses adopted by working class youth . The lack of any progressive political attitudes or activism amongst working class subculturalists does not mean they should be dismissed Clarke et al 1976:45) argue because -

We must also recognise that a developed and organised revolutionary working-class consciousness is only one , among many such possible responses . . . It has been misleading to try and measure the whole spectrum of strategies in the class in terms of this one ascribed form of consciousness , and to define everything else as a token of incorporation .

While keen to valourise all types of working class 'strategies' the authors do note that "Not all the strategies are of equal weight : not all are potentially counter-hegemonic " (Clarke et al 1976:45). While the authors suggest that working class subculturalists have , unlike their conformist peers , partially broken free of hegemony to the extent of perceiving themselves to be at the bottom of a stratified society and expressing this realisation through style they are not unaware of the limits of the

subcultural solution to the problematic faced by the working class . Clarke et al (1976:47-48) note that subcultural involvement provides a 'magic' and symbolic rather than real solution to problems facing working class youth such as educational disadvantage , unemployment and underemployment arguing -

subcultures provided for a section of working class youth (mainly boys) one strategy for negotiating their collective existence . . . they were also attempts at a solution to that problematic experience : a resolution which , because pitched largely at the symbolic level , was fated to fail . The problematic of a subordinate class experience can be 'lived through ' , negotiated or resisted ; but it cannot be resolved at that level or by those means . . . Sub-cultural strategies . . . 'solve' , but in an imaginary way , problems which at the concrete material level remain unresolved .

Though keen to claim subcultures contested hegemony , even the CCCS writers in <u>Resistance through Rituals</u> conceded subcultural 'rituals' and style did nothing to alter the material conditions of either individual subculturalists or the class from which they emerged . Given the subcultural solution involved no redistribution of wealth or power away from it , it is hard to see how the 'dominant class' the CCCS spoke of was in anyway threatened by working class subcultures but the CCCS writers none the less believed that the 'dominant culture' was threatened enough by these groups to engage in a variety of strategies to contain and/or defuse these group's oppositionality so as to maintain hegemony.

Despite its overt and clearly expressed oppositionality , the CCCS writers are curiously unexcited by the Counterculture - possibly because contrary to orthodox Marxist theory it drew its membership from the 'dominant' rather than 'subordinate' class . Drawing on Marcuse's (1969) theory of repressive desublimation Clarke et al (1976) dismiss the Counterculture as largely adaptive and functional to rather than opposed to post scarcity consumer capitalism . The authors do however note that the counterculture did "prefigure , anticipate , foreshadow - though in truncated , diagrammatic and 'Utopian' forms - emergent social forms " (Clarke et al 1976:69) and had the effect of encouraging non-normative affective investments amongst PMC youth marking "the failure of the dominant culture to win over the attachment of a sector of its 'brightest and best' " who disaffiliated from "the goals , structures and institutions of 'straight society ' " (Clarke et al 1976:67). The increasingly subversive actions of these disaffiliated youth , the authors argue was enough of a threat to hegemony that it caused the 'dominant culture ' to exercise the type of violent coercive State power resorted to only in crisis situations . As the British Counterculture developed the reaction of the 'control culture ' progressively hardened from "informal outrage and moral crusading to formal constraint and legal control " (Clarke et al 1976:73) .

Hebdige (1979:138)   claims to avoid the temptation in reading youth subcultures "to locate in its forms some obscure revolutionary potential ". Nonetheless drawing on the work of diverse range of theorists and writers from a range of disciplines

Hebdige develops a thesis that subcultural style is , if not revolutionary , then at least subversive . Hebdige develops the idea hinted at in <u>Resistance through Rituals</u> that the very existence of subcultural styles contradicts the myth of a prosperous , fair and cohesive society and that such styles are (albeit symbolic) forms of resistance . The appearance of youth subcultures in post-war Britain for Hebdige (1979:17) "signalled in a spectacular fashion the breakdown of consensus ". Subcultural style Hebdige claims "signals a Refusal " (Hebdige 1979:3) . Spectacular subcultures , Hebdige argues , are profane articulations which "express forbidden contents (consciousness of class , consciousness of difference) in forbidden forms " (Hebdige 1979:91) - forms such as the transgression of sartorial codes .

Hebdige argues that subcultures indirectly challenge hegemony through style - "the challenge to hegemony which subcultures represent is not issued directly by them . Rather it is expressed obliquely , in style . The objections are lodged , the contradictions displayed . . . at the profoundly superficial level of appearances : that is at the level of signs "(Hebdige 1979:17) . Subcultures are " a symbolic violation of the social order " (Hebdige 1979:19) . Commodities are appropriated by subculturalists and "made to carry 'secret' meanings : meanings which express , in code , a form of resistance to the order which guarantees their continued subordination " (Hebdige 1979:18) . Hebdige (1979:91) arguing "violations of the authorized codes through which the social world is organized and experienced have considerable power to provoke and disturb " constantly emphasises the symbolic power of subcultural style at one point borrowing

.

Eco's (1973) phrase to describe it as ' semiotic guerilla warfare ' . The reaction of the fashion industry and media is seen to illustrate the potent threat posed by subcultures . The threat posed to the 'symbolic order ' by subculturalists is serious enough to necessitate the recuperation and hence emasculation of the subculture by the dominant culture through 'commodity incorporation' - i.e - " the conversion of subcultural signs (dress , music ,etc.) into mass-produced objects " and 'ideological incorporation 'i.e "the 'labelling' and re-definition of deviant behaviour by dominant groups - the police , the media , the judiciary " (Hebdige 1979:94) . While keen to emphasise the subversiveness of subcultures and their styles , Hebdige (1979:130) , like Clarke et al (1976) , concedes the inability of the subcultural strategy to alter the productive system or improve the actual material conditions of either individual subculturalists or the class from which they emerge -

needless to say , the 'explosive junction' never occurs : no amount of stylistic incantation can alter the oppressive mode in which the commodities used in the subculture have been produced .

Australian theorists were in the 1970s as enthusiastic about Gramscian theory as their British counterparts , with Australia's pre-eminent sociologist of the time , Connell , drawing heavily on Gramsci in works such as Class Structure in Australian History (with Irving 1980) and Ruling Class , Ruling Culture (1977) . In the former work Connell equates the Australian Counterculture with the I.W.W describing both as

movements pursuing a counter-hegemonic strategies whilst in the latter work he comments -

In an analysis of hegemony there should always be a consideration of counter-hegemonic activity . . . The most important example of counter-hegemonic activity was the campaign against the Vietnam war in the late 1960s : counterhegemonic as well as directly political , because it involved a violation of the dominant ideological view of Australia's place in the world , it involved symbolic law breaking in demonstrations , and in the latter stages a highly effective campaign of ridicule against the conscription authorities Connell (1977:220) .

Elsewhere Connell (1979 : 188-189) comments -

The most visible signs of radicalism among Australian youth at present are in counter-cultural and sexual liberation movements . . . Some important breaks with the patterns of everyday life under capitalism are occurring here . Though these movements have along way to go , they have opened up country that will need to be occupied in a more general movement towards socialism .

While enthusiastic about the Australian Counterculture , Connell (1977:213) takes a similarly ambivalent approach to Clarke et al (1976) on the libertarian effects of the Counterculture -

Marcuse argues that advanced capitalism is able to relax many of the psychological repressions which had been imposed in an era of greater scarcity and need for accumulation . . . relaxation has occurred in ways that tend to stabilize rather than disrupt the capitalist system . . . the relaxation is both controlled and exploited in the same action . But there are also ways in which a weakening of repressions has led in an anti-capitalist , counter-hegemonic direction .

Connell (1977:222) in concluding his work also makes it clear that small counter-hegemonic groups are by themselves unlikely to be able to affect social change or pose much threat to the ruling class -

Being counter-hegemonic is not enough . One must be relevantly counter-hegemonic , and in sufficient masses to do real damage , and be able to carry through to the actual construction of a human society .

2. Hegemony in decline.

Hebdige (1979) frankly admitted that it was "highly unlikely . . . that the members of any of the subcultures described in this book would recognize themselves reflected here " and that such subculturalist would treat the CCCS's sympathetic readings of their subcultures "with just as much indifference and contempt as the hostile labels

imposed by the courts and the press " (Hebdige 1979:139) . In fact it was not just the

subculturalists in question who were to question the veracity of CCCS portrayals of youth

subcultures and express contempt for CCCS readings of such subcultures . Since circa

1980 a wide range of theorists have been calling into question the work of the CCCS

authors and no aspect of the CCCS approach has come in for more criticism than the

CCCS writers portrayal of subcultures as oppositional organisations engaged in counter-

hegemonic struggle with the dominant class . Woods (1977) , Clarke , (D) (1980) , Cohen

(S) (1980) , Waters (1981) , Clarke (G) (1982) , Dorn and South (1983) , O'Donnell

(1985) , Brake (1985) , Walker (1985 and 1986) , Grossberg (1987) Redhead (1990 and

1993) , Middleton (1990) , Bradley (1992) , Harris (1992) , Tait (1993) , Carrington

(1993) , Forrester (1993) , McFadden (1993) , Ehrich (1993) , Hamm (1993) , Melechi

(1993) , Rietveld (1993) , Willis , (S) (1993) , Moore (1994) , Shuker (1994) and

Thornton (1995) have all argued that the CCCS writers were guilty of romanticising youth

subcultures and overemphasising their oppositional nature .

These critiques of CCCS theory often suggest that the Marxist PMC

academics in Britain in mid 1970s faced with a Counterculture in decline , economist

trade unions and widespread passivity and/or conservatism amongst the adult working

class were desperately in search of a revolutionary subject and forced , somewhat

awkwardly , working class youth subculturalists into the role . Desperate to discover

evidence of counter-hegemonic working class struggle , the CCCS writers , contrary to

Hebdige's claim , failed to resist the temptation to locate within the behaviour , style and

consumption practices of youth subcultures "some obscure revolutionary potential " .

Cohen , (S) (1980:ix) has bemusedly observed of CCCS theory that -

The conceptual tools of Marxism , structuralism and semiotics , a Left

Bank pantheon of Genet , Levi Strauss , Barthes and Althusser have all been wheeled in

to hunt for the hidden code .

Discovering resistance in this hidden code the CCCS proceed to -

prove that mass proletarian resistance to the imposition of bourgeois

control did not after all die out . It lives on in certain forms of delinquency which -

though more symbolic and individualistic than their progenitors - must still be read as

rudimentary forms of political action   (Cohen 1980:ix) .

Once every subcultural practice is thus uncritically valourised , activities such as 'Paki-

bashing ' can be read as a " 'primitive form of political and economic struggle' "(Cohen

1980:ix).

Theorists since the early 1980s have been increasingly reticent to use

Gramscian theory partly due to the 'hegemony' that post-Marxist theory , especially that

of Foucault , has established in the social sciences and partly due to the perception that it

tends to produce , especially in the hands of partisan theorists , simplistic , romantic and

circular analysis . Harris (1992:52) has offered a vigorous condemnation of the frequently opportunistic use of hegemony by cultural studies writers -

gramscian concepts run the risk of depending for their effect on being 'asymmetric' and evasive . In one sort of asymmetry , selected examples can be used to carry the burden of the argument , and , in another sort , the concrete analysis can be pre-structured by the search for privileged concepts (like 'struggle') . . . In skilled hands , any activity which looks as if it reveals choice , or autonomy , or political innocence , for example , is liable to be reinterpreted by some underlying articulation to show that its very autonomy is a source of its usefulness in hegemonic unity . Hegemonic cultures can reveal traces of dominant and subordinate cultures , united by either alliance or struggle , either in some sort of temporary equilibrium or in an immanent state of disequilibrium : pretty well everything can be explained by the term hegemony , therefore , especially when combined with various asymmetries , including one characteristic of history - hindsight .

Harris (1992) , drawing on the work of Golby and Purdue (1984) , goes on to suggest that Gramscian readings were privileged in neo-Marxist CCCS theory because , however simplistic and one sided an account they produced , they at least possessed the saving grace of providing an explanation of the working class' failure to fulfil its supposed role .

.

Redhead (1990) is sceptical that contemporary subcultures can be regarded as resistant and takes the revisionist position throughout The-end-of-the-century-party that the oppositional aspect of all post war British subcultures has been grossly overestimated . Redhead (1990:31) argues that it is the overly romantic readings of previous youth culture which is largely responsible for the contemporary climate of cultural despair . Redhead refers to the New Deviancy theorists argument that it is -

the worthlessness of job training , emptiness of education and lack of satisfactory work opportunities (which the liberal American subcultural theory of the 1950s and 1960s stressed most prominently) that seems most in evidence in contemporary youth subcultural choices . Resistance to dominant cultural values , or overt rebellion , was . . . confined to the middle class counter-culture of the late 1960s . Fatalism , not hope , then becomes , in this version of events , the most frequently encountered effect of mass (youth) unemployment .

Redhead (1990:39) finds such a reading pessimistic and overly simplistic but doesn't substantively dispute it observing -

the more pessimistic readings of the stylistic moods and nuances of active post-punk subcultures stems from an over-optimistic and one dimensional theorisation of youth culture in the past three or four decades .

.

Redhead (1990:25) bluntly asserts " 'Authentic' subcultures were produced by subcultural theories , not the other way round " and goes on to argue -

Theoretical accounts . . . which have positioned , conceptually , youth culture and youth subculture in a relation of resistance to , or rebellion towards , a 'dominant culture' . . . are not capable of capturing the changes in youth culture and rock culture from at least the late 1970s onwards . They are , moreover , unsatisfactory , as accounts of pop history and youth culture in general (Redhead 1990:41- 42) .

Many prominent CCCS writers have distanced themselves in their latter work from Gramscian theory and portrayals of youth subcultures as resistant . In Common Culture Willis , (P) felt obliged to point out that while he "didn't dispute the importance of the notion of hegemony , nor the complexity of the phenomena and questions it tries to encompass " he had " never used the term 'hegemony' simply because it seems too general and malleable a concept to be of much use in the analysis of concrete living social practices "(Willis 1990:156) . In Popular Culture Chambers (1986:207) commented that although the CCCS's work reading the stylistically mediated symbols of class in subcultural signs -

was undoubtedly an important step , the more recent rhetoric of subcultural insubordination has suggested less direct , more complex connections and contexts . Since punk confused the signs of music and dress in its self-parodying , media

conscious collage we have learnt that the social metaphors a subculture employs (its choice of music , clothes , drugs -its 'style ') can rarely be reduced to a single or unambiguous source .

By 1988 Hebdige had had at least a partial apostasy and retreated from previous certitudes to a deeply ambivalent view of contemporary youth subcultures. Like Chambers he avoids disavowing the CCCS's work of the 1970s , suggesting it correctly read youth subcultures between 1950-1980 but is unable to deal with post punk subcultures . Hebdige's (1988:8) essay on Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungen is written not just to mark their passing but also -

the "moment" of the punk "subculture " and the model of subcultural "negation" and "resistance" which informed an earlier phase in my own work . . . theoretical models are as tied to their own times as the human bodies that produce them . The idea of subculture-as-negation grew up alongside punk , remained inextricably linked to it and died when it died .

Hebdige (1988:35) goes on to reveal the extent to which Foucault has usurped Gramsci in his theorising writing -

the subcultural milieu has been constructed underneath the authorised discourses , in the face of the multiple disciplines of the family , the school and the

workplace . Subculture forms up in the space between surveillance and the evasion of surveillance , it translates the fact of being under scrutiny into the pleasure of being watched .

Striking an appropriately postmodern paradoxical note Hebdige (1988:35) expounds on the indeterminacy of subculture -

The "subcultural response" is neither simply affirmation nor refusal , neither "commercial exploitation" nor "genuine revolt" . It is neither simply resistance against some external order nor straightforward conformity with the parent culture . It is both a declaration of independence , of otherness , of alien intent , a refusal of anonymity , of subordinate status . It is an insubordination . And at the same time it is also a confirmation of the fact of powerlessness , a celebration of impotence . Subcultures are both a play for attention and a refusal , once attention has been granted , to be read according to the Book .

3. Foucault vs Gramscian-Marxism

Foucault is of course the absent presence haunting much recent analysis produced on youth subcultures . Foucault's work obviously poses a serious challenge to the Gramscian-Marxist theory produced by the CCCS . In what Hebdige (1985) has described as a war of the worlds between two very different semantic planets , theorists

are now obliged to embrace either a Marxist or Foucauldian perspective with each producing a very different picture of the function of subcultures within the social formation . Tait (1993:1) has argued "the theoretical paradigms of the 1970s " still exercise an insidious hold over Australian theorists and that "Unless the whole area of youth studies is to become a theoretical backwater " Tait (1993:1) theorists should abandon post-haste "recourse to the romantic and redundant "rituals of resistance" described by the CCCS " (Tait:8) and embrace the theoretical paradigm of the 1990s i.e Foucault's frameworks .

Tait points out that the CCCS writers had a Marxist 'juridico-discursive' conception of power . If Foucault's conception of power - i.e that it is not a totalised generality , that it does not have its genesis in any specific location - the occupants of which utilise it to further their self interest , that it is productive rather than repressive etc - is subscribed to then the tenets on which CCCS theory are constructed largely collapse . Tait (1993:3) notes the Marxist notion of ideology , central to CCCS theory , is called into question by Foucault -

Since power is not seen to coerce or misrepresent , but to regulate and routinise , social control is therefore not exercised on the working classes by distorting the way in which the real is perceived , but by the construction of a pervasive political rationality which positions individuals within a field of distribution .

A reassessment of hegemony is also necessitated once ideology is called into question . Tait (1993:3) , drawing on the work of Smart (1986) , suggests -

in order to remain viable , hegemony must be extracted from the Marxist problematic . . . it should not be understood in terms of force or coercion , or even consent , but rather as the manner in which techniques , routines and procedures subtly permeate cultural practices , thereby facilitating social cohesion . . . governmental agencies assist in the effective implementation of a "matrix of individuation " which regulates and determines the construction of the subject . This matrix is not reducible to the dichotomy of force and consent , since it does not define a domain where they are practical or relevant criteria . Hegemony is therefore to be understood in terms of the profusion of mechanisms through which events are constituted , practices are developed and bodies are rendered docile .

Conceding Foucault's admission that "there are no relations of power without resistances " (Foucault 1984:95) , Tait (1993:5) nonetheless insists that the various strategies of resistance youth develop against the normalising and regulatory agencies acting upon them cannot be "aggregated and romanticised into a generalised , working-class opposition to the totalised power of the ruling classes " .

Claims that the analysis produced by the CCCS , like Marxist analysis in general , tends towards being reductionist and totalisingly over obsessed with the notion

of class struggle are not without merit . No doubt , as (P) Willis (1990) and Harris (1992) have argued , the 'malleable' concept of hegemony has been abused by theorists determined to find sharp conflict in all interactions between the classes . As Sercombe (1993:8-9) has argued it is also likely Foucauldian approach is superior to a Marxist one in analysing -

the minutiae . . . the social relationships at the lowest level . . . producing a wealth of valuable insights into the nature of social relationships , on the manifold shifting relationships and mechanisms of power . A "diffusing " approach like Foucault's can expose the tiny inner structures of such processes , which are often trowelled over by a "totalising" theory .

Nonetheless the author subscribes (albeit cautiously) to the Gramscian-Marxist rather than Foucauldian perspective of the social formation . The author shares a conception of the social formation similar to that subscribed to be members of the CCCS in the 1970s and more recently theorists such as Sercombe (1993) , (S) Willis (1993) and Grossberg (1992) i.e - one in which identifiable classes exist , one in which fundamental inequalities of power exist , one in which inequitable power relations are maintained due to those in subordinate positions failing to mobilise to pursue their self and class interest because they are "living in someone else's ideological universe " Grossberg (1992:90) , one in which power if not always having negative effects neither always has positive and empowering ones , one in which power does "coerce and misrepresent " rather than just

"regulate and routinise" and one in which force and consent remain "relevant and practical" criteria .

The Foucauldian approach narrowly focusing on the specific and particular rather than the general has its weaknesses as well as its strengths . White (1993:ix) has observed that Foucauldian perspectives -

By operating at the "micro" level of interaction and restricting analysis to examination of narrowly conceived institutional processes . . . tend to ignore even dismiss the existence of deep structural cleavages and social divisions which both constitute and permeate the social order .

Similarly Foucault's emphasis on the diffuse distribution and multiplicity of power and the reciprocity of social relations obscures the degree of subordination and relative powerlessness of certain groups within society . Foucault (1980:142) seems reluctant to admit the existence of classes at all and especially the existence of a subordinated class insisting -

one should not assume a massive and primal condition of domination , a binary structure with "dominators" on one side and "dominated " on the other , but rather a multiform production of relations of domination .

As Sercombe (1993:9) has written -

Foucault's interest in seeing power as a participatory and reciprocal relation, in which no one party can be seen always and everywhere as "the oppressor" and the other "the victim", leads him to underplay the sharp reality of power difference.

Sarup (1988:90) has argued that Foucault fails to define whom power operates for and against and is at a loss to explain why if power is productive rather than repressive people resist it -

Foucault is vague . . . He has difficulty in defining what this power operates against. It seems power is almost a metaphysical principle. Power is everywhere : it filters up from below, it is produced at every moment . . . Power he says, always produces resistance. But the question is, why should it ? If power cannot be identified with repression (Foucault insists that it is both productive and regulative), what is the mechanism that generates resistance ? Why do people resist ?, Why do they obey ?

In reply to those Foucauldians who argue the Marxist 'juridico - discursive' conception of power is overly negative and polarised and Marxist analysis totalising and deterministic it can be argued that Focault's conception of power is overly

optimistic and that Foucauldian analysis pays insufficient attention to the very real constraints people's position , or increasingly lack of a position , in the productive system places on them . Contemporary Foucauldian analysis is reminiscent of that produced by Functionalist theorists . Like their Functionalist predecessors Foucauldians are predisposed downplay both the degree of class conflict in society and the political significance of that conflict portraying social relations as benign reciprocal arrangements which , at least in the long run benefit both parties .

The enthusiastic belief in the supposed subversiveness of subcultural practices that distinguishes the CCCS work of the 1970s now appears unwarranted . However so is the pessimism characterising much recent work on the supposedly incorporated , consumerist and apolitical/conservative nature of contemporary youth and youth subculture . Neither Gramscian-Marxist theories stressing the resistance of subcultural youth nor post-modern theories stressing their impotence and/or incorporation can alone explain the wide range of contemporary subcultural responses ranging from green radicalism to escapist hedonism .

4. Does alternative equal resistant ? .

The CCCS writers were confronted with the problem of portraying subcultural practices as counter-hegemonic acts of resistance in spite of actual subculturalists describing their behaviour in far less grandiose terms as merely 'larking

about ' , 'joking about' or 'getting into mischief' (see Corrigan 1976) . The comments of contemporary Australian PMC subculturalists are   much more encouraging to those analysts looking for evidence of resistance . Members of all four PMC subcultures , even Ravers , are typically insistent that they are part of an 'alternative' culture which is somehow opposed or at least antithetical to , and far removed from , a 'mainstream' culture . Many PMC subculturalists are also keen to present themselves as part of a separatist bohemian elite whose lifestyles , attitudes and activities are far removed from those of their mundane suburbanite fellow citizens . Whereas the CCCS writers project was to argue that subculturalists actions were politically significant even when subculturalists themselves did not apparently see them as such ; the task confronting the analyst of contemporary Australian   PMC subcultures is to determine whether subculturalists truly live up to their rhetorical claims to exist outside the 'mainstream' of Australian society . Both subculturalists and those who study them are wont to glibly deploy terms such as 'Mainstream' and 'Alternative' unproblematically assuming the 'alternativeness' of subculturalists can and should be taken for granted . However attempting to identify non-normative characteristics of PMC subculturalists which might separate them out from the 'mainstream' is a difficult task . PMC subculturalists are not typically homosexual , physically or mentally handicapped , drug addicts or alcoholics , criminals , immigrants or members of persecuted religious or ethnic minorities . In fact most Ravers , Ferals , Gothics and Indie subculturalists typically being well educated , Anglo-Celtic individuals from solidly suburban PMC backgrounds , would appear to be firmly located within the mainstream rather than on the margins of Australian society .

The key to Ferals' , Gothics' and Indie Subculturalists' sense of not being part of the mainstream appears to lie in the indeterminate class position suspended between the working class and the corporate fraction of the PMC and upper/ruling class . As discussed in the previous chapter subculturalists from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC possessing a large amount of cultural capital but little economic capital feel alienated both from the working class and the corporate fraction of their own class . (Ravers feel as alienated from the working class as other PMC subculturalists but unlike them do not appear to feel alienated from the corporate fraction of the PMC -frequently because they are part of it .) Turner (1992) has described how working class individuals and the culture they participated in - revolving around pub rock played in outer suburban beer barns appalled and repulsed the Indie subculturalists he observed in the late 1980s -

To the cool cosmopolitans , the full-on , unsophisticated , roistering raging of the westies was an affront , an unpalatable reminder of what the tacky basics of rock music and popular culture were really about : it was impossible to attend a gig at an outer suburban pub and think you were taking part in some groovy , cool , scene .

Ex-Gothic Riley (1992:121) sums up the view still typically subscribed to by PMC subculturalists when describing the Australia of the late 1970s she writes " Australia seemed to be , for all those who were displaced from it a kingdom of the

.

yobbo " . Riley (1992:120-121) describes working class pub rock fans as " that primevally driven mass of philistinic , reactionary suburbanites " and notes -

Traditionally , suburbia and its ambassadors have been the natural enemy of the avant garde , and at various moments during this century wave upon wave of the intelligentsia have emigrated in order to escape it .

The intelligentsia (or at least those in possession of abundant cultural capital) no longer have to flee to the old world to escape the dread suburbanites but they do band together with their own kind within the relative sanctuary of subcultures . PMC subculturalists , have a conception of the culture and leisure activities that the majority of their fellow citizens participate as irredeemably philistine and even asinine . Whether or not it is an accurate perception , PMC subculturalists appear to believe the majority of their fellow citizens - those in the mainstream - are enmeshed in a (low-brow working class) culture revolving around motor cars and/or the beach , playing or more frequently watching sport especially football , listening to formulaic pop music or pub rock in live and recorded forms , heavy drinking , attending venues such as 'tacky ' suburban clubs and pubs and , in the case of men , brawling and macho male bonding . When asked to explain what differentiates them from the mainstream , PMC subculturalists will often point their supposedly extraordinary leisure activities saying they attend Raves/Gothic theme nights/Indie gigs/Doofs and pagan rituals rather than engaging in the type activities supposedly favoured by the mass of their fellow citizens .

There are , in reality , many groups , comprising at least a large minority possibly even a majority of the population , who like PMC subculturalists , never or rarely participate in those activities PMC subculturalists imagine to be integral to 'mainstream' Australian culture . The fact that a group engages in leisure activities other than those commonly engaged in by their fellow citizens hardly makes that a group a counterculture . It is only if the activities of PMC subculturalists can be seen in some way as subversive , rather than just of minority interest , that we can argue that 'alternativeness' is synonymous with oppositionality . The vast majority of activities engaged in by PMC subculturalists , with the exception of some of those engaged in by Ferals , are not subversive . Little threat , for example , is posed to the political structures of Australian society by a proportion of its citizens opting to attend an indie gig rather than a pub rock act or go to a Rave rather than suburban disco .

Gothic , Ferals and Indie subculturalists other claim to 'alternativeness' apart from not participating in the culture of their 'yob' , ' ocker' or 'westie' counterparts in their leisure time is not being involved in the high status , high paying employment of their careerist 'yuppie' peers . Listening to Gothics , Ferals and Indie subculturalists one could easily get the impression that these individuals have courageously turned their back on employment in the professions or elsewhere in the core economy and , showing a complete disregard for the material rewards and social status such employment would bring , chosen a humbler yet more personally fulfilling life of bohemian non-conformity

much in the manner in which aristocratic and upper middle class youth in previous societies turned their backs on a life of privilege to devote their lives to working for the betterment of the poor in religious or progressive political organisations . Were it the case that , as Gouldner (1970) and Roszak (1971) and the CCCS writers (mistakenly) believed it to be with the Counterculture , that PMC subcultures "marked the failure of the dominant culture to win over the attachment of a sector of its 'brightest and best ' " Clarke et al (1976:67) and that significant numbers of youth otherwise destined to become the nation's ruling class (or its trusted servants) were abandoning conventional aspirations to pursue bohemian lifestyles then that would obviously invest the Gothic and Indie subcultures with a degree of political significance . However as discussed in the previous chapter , the Gothic , Feral and Indie subcultures typically draw (as did their Countercultural predecessor) their membership from the non-corporate rather than corporate fraction of the PMC . The vast majority of their members are not , and will never be , in any position to join the ruling class - they are destined (at best) for jobs as schoolteachers , academics or mid-level public servants . As previously discussed youthful members of the non-corporate fraction of the PMC have become increasingly proleterianized and more and more often confronted with a 'career path' consisting of low paid , low status work in the service sector or public service interspersed with periods of unemployment . Those subculturalists from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC , like working class youth , can afford to denigrate high status , well renumerated employment and those who aspire to it safe in the knowledge that their 'integrity ' is unlikely ever to be compromised by them being in a position to attain such employment .

Given their weak position in the labour market Indie and Gothic subculturalists stated disinterest in material possessions and social status would appear to be a position more based on ego saving false bravado than the result of some highly developed progressive political or religious consciousness (as previously discussed Gothics and Indie subculturalist possess no such consciousness) .

5. Subcultural Oppositionality.

Abercrombie et al (1984:246) identify one of the problems with the concept of subcultures being "The concept implies the existence of an identifiable dominant culture , but the fragmentation of contemporary culture makes the identification of such a common or dominant culture problematic " . Certainly the type of simplistic reduction of society into a dominant class served by a dominant culture which is struggled against by subordinate groups favoured by the CCCS writers is inadequate in analysing the contemporary Australian situation . This is especially true when dealing with indeterminate groups such the non-corporate fraction of the PMC who find themselves suspended between a 'dominant ' upper and 'subordinate' working class and whose responses to the wider society in which they exist range from resigned acceptance to almost complete rejection . While there may be no clearly identifiable dominant culture in Australian society , neither is it a postmodern pluralistic free for all in which any and all belief systems and lifestyles are accorded equal respect . Forrester (1993:107) has argued that while it may be difficult to identify and refer to a dominant culture operating in

Australian society this does not however mean there is not a dominant value system instructing all groups in the society whatever their location as to -

what is considered culturally appropriate behaviour and thought . This dominant value or ideology is constantly being modified and is never homogeneous , and within this dominant value system there are a wide variety of cultures .

Similarly Brake (1985:6) has observed "In any complex , stratified society there are several cultures which develop within the context of a dominant value system ."

Attempting to identify a dominant value system in an ethnically diverse , multi-faith but largely secular , relatively liberal and cosmopolitan society in which the State does not just tolerate but actively encourages multiculturalism ; is a complex task . Nonetheless some basic dominant values can be identified as informing Australian society ; opposition to which can be seen as subversive .To state the obvious , Australian society is based upon a capitalist economy and has a labour market organised by a system of private property . In Australia's dominion/settler capitalist society economic growth has always been viewed as the vehicle to shared prosperity with all classes and political parties expected to co-operate in the attempt to encourage such growth (see Connell 1980) . Parliamentary politics in Australia , most theorists agree , (see for example Aitkin 1977) has always been a pragmatic materialistic affair with the role of the state being to provide the conditions and infrastructure necessary to ensure the private sector can generate

economic growth . Further economic growth is generally seen as the primary solution to all economic and social problems . Especially since 1983 letting the market operate unhampered has been seen as the solution to all contemporary problems by a remarkable coalition of opinion leaders in both major political parties , the most influential sections of bureaucracy , the media , business and even to a certain extent the ACTU[1] .

The correlate of economic growth has , in the post-war period been consumerism . A consumerist philosophy would appear to be widespread amongst Australian citizens with consumption practices alongside productive role now providing a source of identity for many citizens . As with other advanced capitalist societies consumerism is crucial to the current economic systems continued functioning and enthusiastically encouraged by the stakeholders in that system . Despite the serious economic problems that have confronted the society since the early 1970s Australia is still seen as a land of opportunity with an optimistic future - a fair society without the entrenched class system of the old world or the inequalities of America in which all can enjoy with a reasonable amount of effort material success . Brake's comments (1985:149) on Canadian society apply equally well to Australia .

Work is an important means to the respectable life , and if it is assumed that the system is open , then work becomes a crucial element (in place of privilege) in access to scarce resources . . . Failure becomes personalised , and the system remains above reproach .

Despite a long running imbalance in the supply of and demand for paid employment ,

unemployment is still seen as the ultimate injustice and deprivation if unchosen and the

ultimate act of anti-social parasitism if chosen . Work is still regarded as the appropriate

source of self-worth and personal dignity especially for men .

Connell (1977) observed that those young Australians he surveyed

overwhelmingly believed that Australian society , while inequitable , was just and that

individuals rewards within the society were proportional to their efforts . He found that

individuals from across the class spectrum held similar values emphasising ambition and

(material) success with all typically demonstrating " a prudential respecting of . . .

authority and private property "(Connell 1977:187) . Connell (1977:182) also found that

the value pattern of possessive individualism was incalculated into Australian citizens

during their childhood socialisation and that -

by adolescence a commitment has developed to private goals and private

fulfilments rather than collective ones . . . The general picture is still one of a generation

whose concerns are mainly personal . . . The tendency to individualism and the focussing

of concerns on private life are plainly compatible with the continuation of a class

structure based on private property and relying on the absence of organised mass

resistance .

Connell (1977:187-188) goes on to note that the status quo is maintained not so much through a dominant class successfully incalculating conservative values into those in subordinate positions as by the failure of those in subordinate positions to take up oppositional values -

Where attitudes and values are important is in a negative sense : in what does not happen , or at least not on any scale . The development of an effective opposition to the ruling class does require the articulation of an oppositional world-view and alternative social values , and their adoption by large sections of the working class . The crucial feature of the cultural defence of capitalism is not so much the incalculation of middle-class values through the whole society (though that would do the trick) , as the prevention of the formation of an oppositional working-class culture . [2]

All PMC subculturalists , bar the Ferals , would appear to subscribe to what Connell describes as the 'disengaged consensus' , that is they are either satisfied or resigned to the status quo and not motivated to work towards a reordering of Australian society . As previously discussed Indie and Gothic subculturalists commonly express contempt for the corporate fraction of their class -the "yuppies " . This is however would appear to be the limit of any type of oppositional worldview and it should be noted that the subculturalists animus is directed more against those directly above them in the class structure rather than those at the top of it and that these subculturalists typically

demonstrate an equal or greater contempt towards working class individuals . Indie and Gothic subculturalists worldview might be , to borrow the language of industrial sociology , described as economistic rather than revolutionary and they are to paraphrase Connell devoted to private goals and fulfilments rather than collective ones .

Within their often restricted means Gothic and Indie subculturalists are just as enthusiastic consumers as their 'mainstream' peers and a large market exists to compete for the indie dollar . Both the Indie and Gothic subcultures have unemployed members though they would appear to be a small minority and neither of these subcultures can be seen as a 'dole culture' in the way for example the British Punk subculture of the late 1970s was perceived by some observers to be . While being a welfare recipient may not carry the opprobrium it does within the wider society within these subcultures neither is it regarded as an impressive or desirable role to find oneself in . There is no expectation within these subcultures , as existed within sections of the Counterculture (see Neville 1970) that one should drop out and live as an unapologetic mendicant . While it may be considered inappropriate in both the Indie and Gothic subcultures to express concern for ones future employment prospects or interest in certain well renumerated careers it appears most members harbour hopes of attaining some type of attractive employment and with this goal in mind are willing to undertake long periods of tertiary education . Indie and Gothic subculturalists do not typically seriously endanger their future by voluntarily dropping out of the education system and labour market for long periods of time . Involvement in these subcultures is an undemanding , low risk form of bohemianism .

Hamm (1993) in his study of American skinheads (from both working class and PMC backgrounds) found that the subculturalists he surveyed rather than demonstrating any 'resistance' toward their society had ambitious educational and occupational goals for themselves and were enthusiastically working towards achieving these goals . Hamm (1993:114) concludes skinheads have internalised the achievement ideology of American society and that -

the most dangerous skinheads are socially homogenous . That is , terrorist youth subcultures appear to be largely inhabited by conformists who exhibit almost hyperactive levels of acceptance of the dominant American social order . They are not rebels at all .

Similarly Polk (1993:103) has written of the Australian situation -

Time and again , researchers report back how even in the most outsider and deviant youth groups , the individual participants maintain a strong commitment to , and belief in , many of the conventional goals of "growing up" such as at some point finding a decent job , settling down and starting a family .

Like Hamm's skinheads and Polk's deviant youth Indie and Gothic subculturalists demonstrate a commitment to conventional goals .

The most common fantasy of Indie and Gothic subculturalists , especially younger ones , is that of achieving (individual) success within the music industry not being part of a collective uprising that establishes a socialist utopia . Indie and Gothic subculturalists may not be satisfied with Australian society and their place in it but they appear resigned to it . They do not appear to have any ambitions of acting together either with their fellow subculturalists or as part of some wider alliance in order to bring about social change that will benefit the whole of their class fraction . Rather these subculturalists typically modestly hope to establish some form of materially comfortable and personally fulfilling lifestyle within the existing society . They may not be conformist , ambitious 'possessively individual' careerists as many of their peers in the corporate fraction of the PMC are but neither are they revolutionaries . Moore (1994) has emphasised the need to distinguish between the attitudes expressed by subculturalists and their actual actions . Though Indie and Gothic subculturalists may express attitudes which may appear to be 'counter-hegemonic' it must be recognised that they do not engage in activities which in anyway threaten to disrupt existing power and economic structures .

The Rave subculture does not exhibit any resistance even on a rhetorical level . Ravers don't even express anti-status attitudes , (such as protesting disinterest in high income occupations) , let alone engage in any counter hegemonic activities . As previously discussed , very few Ravers are unemployed and many possess high disposable incomes and either enjoy employment in the core labour market or the prospect of such

employment upon the completion of their education . Many Ravers appear satisfied rather than just resigned to the status quo and consume - clothes , music and drugs - with frenetic enthusiasm . With the exception of their drug use , Ravers are typically highly committed to conventional goals such as the pursuit of career success and material wealth .

The Feral subculture is the only contemporary subculture which conforms to the CCCS portrait of PMC subcultures as organisations which express opposition to their host society in an overt and clearly political sense . Short of engaging in Weatherman/Red Brigade type terrorist activity it is difficult to imagine how Ferals could be any less incorporated and more at odds with the dominant value system . The Ferals are typically unashamed welfare recipients uninterested in any type of paid employment or pursuing any type of conventional career . Many regard working to defend/repair the environment as a full time vocation . Perhaps even more subversive than their refusal to participate in the productive sphere is the Ferals refusal to participate in a consumerist lifestyle . Many Ferals engage in radical green activism , call for a cessation or even reversal of economic growth and envisage an anarchist society in which presently existing property relations and power structures would be largely or completely abolished . Both the Ferals own lifestyle and political activism are attempts to frustrate and/or transform what Ferals perceive to be a rapacious , wasteful , unjust economic system .

Outside the leisure industry there would be little impact on Australian society if Australian citizens en masse decided to become members of the Rave , Gothic or Indie subcultures . Existing political and economic arrangements would remain , it can be reasonably assumed , much the same . However if even a small minority of the Australian population , say 5% to 10% were to adopt the ecologically conscious drop out Feral lifestyle it might , arguably , have a significant impact across many areas of Australian society . The question then arises why the counter hegemonic Feral subculture is viewed with such equanimity even disinterest with those with an investment in the maintenance of the status quo . The answer would seem to be that while the subculture , with its very small membership and its limited appeal to a small section of youth from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC , may be able to achieve minor environmental victories such as the delay , frustration or ending of logging activities in certain areas , it is presently in no position to force major social change and a reordering of Australian society . As Connell (1977:222) has observed if an organisation is going to act as a transforming political force "Being counter-hegemonic is not enough . One must be relevantly counter-hegemonic , and in sufficient masses to do real damage " .

6. Subcultural Drug Use.

Illicit drug use is common within four PMC subcultures and is seen to have played an integral part in the creation and development of the most recent PMC subculture [3] . It was members of the Counterculture who were the first section of PMC

youth to enthusiastically embrace illicit drugs such as Marijuana and LSD and during the late 1960s and early 1970s much was written suggesting that individuals who "turned on " would then "drop out " a prospect which predicably excited progressives (see Leary 1971) while alarming conservatives . Powerful consciousness altering drugs were seen to function as a vehicle to esoteric/mystical insights , which would lead to much expanded understandings of the self and society , which in turn would lead to a rearrangement of affective investments resulting in a partial or complete disaffiliation from society and abandonment of normative goals and values . However as the Counterculture faded it became more apparent that there was no necessary nexus between illicit drug use and withdrawal from society and/or a countercultural belief system .

Drug use is seen to play an integral part in the Rave subculture . Redhead (1993:12,13) has written -

to de-contextualise Ecstasy use . . . from its predominant setting within what has loosely been called rave culture is both unrewarding and misleading . It is clear that Ecstasy and rave culture go hand in glove ; there may well be an internal argument amongst aficionados over which came first , but to most ravers they are inseparable .

While not universal or mandatory amongst Australian Ravers , use of Ecstasy (3 , 4 Methylenedioxymethamphetamine or MDMA) and to a lesser extent LSD , Ketamine , amphetamines and cocaine appears very widespread and as previously discussed the whole

Rave environment from the frenetic exuberant music to the psychedelic lightshow is specifically designed to appeal to a drugged consciousness . There is little evidence that the altered states of consciousness Ravers experience under the influence of drugs result in them re-ordering their affective investments in a non-normative direction . Redhead (1993:10) has written of Ecstasy and its users -

Ecstasy is used recreationally (there is little evidence to show that the drug may be addictive) . Ecstasy users tend to disassociate themselves from opiate drug users (whom they themselves see as 'junkies ') . Ecstasy is a weekend drug ; there is little evidence to show that ravers are using Ecstasy (or for that matter any drugs) during the week , or more specifically when not engaged in leisure pursuits .

Redhead is writing of the British situation but his remarks apply equally well to the Australian situation . Australian Ravers drug use appears to be strictly recreational and , as previously discussed , Ravers are far from being disaffiliated from their society .

Drug use , though not integral to , is common within , the Feral , Indie and Gothic subcultures . Marijuana appears to be the most popular illicit drug within these three subcultures , with use of amphetamines , barbiturates and LSD also common . Use of expensive drugs such as Ecstasy and Cocaine and hard drugs such as Heroin does not appear to be common . As with Ravers , drug use for the vast majority of Indie and Gothic subculturalists appears to be a recreational activity , indulged in during leisure

time - generally on the weekend . Ferals without the responsibilities of work or study and often with ready access to cheap marijuana are able to indulge more frequently than their Gothic , Raver or Indie counterparts . It should be noted that Ferals do not typically describe their disaffiliation from society or non-normative values as stemming from drug experiences or even see any connection between drug use and the lifestyle they lead and a proportion of Ferals eschew all types of drugs .

It would be more accurate to see drug use in the case of most PMC subculturalists as acting as a substitute for rather than precursor of , or companion to , political activity to alter an unsatisfactory reality . Many of the drugs favoured by PMC subculturalists - marijuana , barbiturates , LSD , MDMA - tend to render the user passive and content and defuse both anger and motivation . The drug most associated with social disorder - alcohol is - proudly eschewed by Ferals and many Ravers and regarded as a fairly quotidian intoxicant by Gothic and Indie subculturalists . Use of drugs such as Heroin associated with criminality is uncommon amongst PMC subculturalists . Presumably due to its widespread prevalence throughout contemporary Australian society illicit drug use is not regarded by contemporary PMC subculturalists , as it apparently was by many Counterculturalists (see (P)Willis 1976) , as an existential chasm dividing the (drug) enlightened subculturalists from the rest of society . Rather drug use is typically prosaically viewed as solely a means to intoxication -a form of pleasurable escapism to be engaged in during leisure time rather be pursued as a way of life .

7. The non-mobilisation of control culture.

The CCCS writers (see for example Clarke et al 1976 , Hebdige 1979)
expressed a great deal of interest in the reaction of the wider society to youth subcultures .
It was presumably the (over)reaction of in particular the media and sundry other moral
entrepreneurs to subculturalists   that encouraged these theorists to overestimate the
transgressive power of these subcultures 'resistance' . Recently Thornton (1995:167) has
pointed out that tabloid journalists like Marxist academics possess an agenda that
predisposes them to invent or at least massively overestimate the subversiveness of youth
subcultures -

we shouldn't assume the presence of political subversion just because a
youth culture got a negative response from part of the media . For , rather than
operating with any imperative to repress or oppress , media are motivated by corporate
agendas like generating sensational copy to keep up high sales or maintaining their
image as a family-orientated public service . In other words , media react to phenomena
which don't actually threaten them , and youth cultures . . . are one such subject .

Thornton (1995:137) also states -

While subcultural studies have tended to argue that youth subcultures are
subversive until the very moment they are represented by the mass media (Hebdige 1979

and 1987) , here it is argued that these kinds of taste cultures (not to be confused with activist organizations) become politically relevant only when they are framed as such . In other words , derogatory media coverage is not the verdict but the essence of their resistance .

Perhaps due to the strength of the tabloid print media in that nation and/or its post -imperial decline , rigid class system and large underclass moral panics revolving around youth subcultures seem to far more frequent and large scale in the U.K than outside it . Most accounts of British subcultures , from the classic CCCS work of the 1970s to more recent work by theorists such as Redhead (1990) and Thornton (1995) , provide descriptions of moral panics occurring around these subcultures while theorists examining subcultures in other societies make little mention of such phenomena . Brake (1985:152 ,161) notes that Canadian youth subcultures -

tend to be derivative , and insufficiently large to form any sense of moral outrage . . . By and large , however , young people have not been collectively scapegoated . There are no major 'folk devils' and moral panics . . . there has been no escalation of these 'folk devils' to develop moral panics about Canada's national decline .

The only notable moral panic around youth subcultures Shuker (1994) identifies in relation to New Zealand society is that which occurred in the late 1950s around Bodgies .

The closest approximation of a moral panic around a youth subculture in recent times in New Zealand was some short lived , sensational and simplistic press coverage on the suicide of three Gothics in quick succession . However as Shuker (1994:271) notes -

the reaction to the Gothic suicides hardly represented a crisis of hegemony , necessitating a reassertion of Cohen's 'control culture ' . . . the gothics were not folk devils , and hardly represented a full blown moral panic .

In Australia , as apparently in Canada and New Zealand , there has been little evidence of moral panic and/or an authoritarian 'control culture ' mobilising to attack PMC subcultures . While there have certainly been moral panics revolving around youth in Australia (see Sercombe 1993) these have generally been orchestrated by what Sercombe (1993:9) describes as "The crime wave / moral panic / lock-them-up brigade" and have impacted chiefly on working class and underclass youth (particularly aboriginal and ethnic youth) rather than PMC subculturalists . There exists no legislative response to contemporary PMC subculturalists such as the Disorderly Conduct Suppression Bill of 1892 , colloquially known as the Anti-Larrikin Bill , aimed at the Pushes or more recently a spate of Acts such as the Serious Crimes and Repeat Offenders Act of Western Australia or Parental Responsibility Act or Street Safety Bill of N.S.W aimed at 'gangs' of working class youth . Gothics , Ravers and Indie subculturalists not being typically associated with criminality (bar drug use) , nor typically congregating in public spaces such as shopping malls do not typically come into contact/conflict with the police . The

author did not find any evidence that Gothic , Raver or Indie subculturalists believed themselves to be the victims of serious police harassment , nor in the limited literature presently existing on these subculturalists is there mention of such harassment taking place . Ferals as a result of both their vagrant lifestyle and involvement in environmental activism do come in contact with the police and many have complaints of being "hassled" however there seems little evidence that a systematic campaign of harassment is being waged against the Ferals by the authorities or the Ferals are treated any differently from other individuals involved in a vagrant lifestyle and/or protests and blockades . There has been no Australian equivalent to the draconian British Criminal Justice Bill which aimed to severely restrain - and even obliterate the Rave and Traveller subcultures in that society . Though existing drug laws provide a vehicle for attack on PMC subculturalists neither the police nor judiciary in Australia have used them in this manner as for instance their American and English counterparts did in combating the Counterculture during the late 1960s and early 1970s .

The mass media in Australia unlike its British counterpart has demonstrated little interest in PMC youth subcultures even the more 'spectacular' ones such as the Ferals and Gothics . What little coverage that has occurred has generally been simplistic and sometimes unsympathetic but it has rarely been hysterical . The sole example of something approximating a moral panic surrounding a PMC subculture in recent history occurred following the ecstasy-related death of Anna Wood (a photogenic 15 year old suburban Sydney schoolgirl from an intact 'normal' PMC family) following her

attendance at a dance party in 1995 . Apart from the attempted closure of one venue there was little evidence of any significant mobilisation of a control culture against the Rave subculture and after a short while the mass media returned to largely ignoring the subculture as it had done for the first eight years of its existence . It should be noted that in media portrayals PMC subculturalists have typically been presented not as the perpetrators of crime and violence or agents of social breakdown but as potential victims needing protection . Whether it be listening to the potentially suicide-inducing lyrics of Gothic and Indie lyrics or consuming potentially fatal drugs such as Ecstasy PMC subculturalists are typically presented as engaging in activities which are a danger to themselves rather than society . Gothics , Ravers , Indie subculturalists and even Ferals have yet to be portrayed as a threat to ordinary citizens or public order .

Though the wider society has shown little interest in the ideological form of incorporation it has engaged in the commodity form . Both the downwardly mobile 'grunge' ensembles favoured by Indie subculturalists and the 1970s kitsch outfits favoured by Ravers were taken up by fashion designers with the latter style attracting achieving mass popularity . The more spectacular Feral and Gothic styles are yet to suffer such a fate . The relationship PMC subcultures and the wider society have in Australia would be best characterised as one of mutual indifference . The only two subcultures with sufficient numbers and cultural influence to challenge the status quo , in the way the Counterculture did have remained essentially apolitical while the only 'political' subculture has not attracted a sufficiently large membership to act as a transforming political force . Since the

demise of the Counterculture PMC subcultures have posed no serious threat to the State and the State has had no need to resort to formal constraint , legal control or outright violence against PMC subculturalists .

8. Deviant leisure.

Hebdige (1979:122) notes –

a subculture . . . can represent a major dimension in people's lives - an axis erected in the face of the family around which a secret and immaculate identity can be made to cohere - or it can be a slight distraction , a bit of light relief from the monotonous but nonetheless paramount realities of school , home and work . It can be used as a means of escape , of total detachment from the surrounding terrain , or as a way of fitting back in to it and settling down after a weekend or evening spent letting off steam . In most cases it is used , as Phil Cohen suggests , magically to achieve both ends .

Theorists , not least , Hebdige himself have been inclined to see involvement in subcultural activities as markedly different to participation in other types of leisure activities - as indicating some disaffiliation or resistance to the wider society rather than merely a form of harmless , strictly bounded , catharsis which more underpins than undermines actors labour discipline . The Indie , Rave and Gothic subcultures are all

essentially weekend cultures - those involved in them may consider themselves subculturalists 24 hours a day and 7 days a week but nonetheless as previously noted these subculturalist during the week lead lives indistinguishable from their non-subcultural peers which are dominated by the "paramount realities " of work or school . It is typically only on the weekend that these individuals interact in large numbers with their fellow subculturalists at subcultural events such as Raves , Gigs or Gothic theme nights .

Frith (1983:224) has made the point - " For most young people leisure is enjoyed not in opposition to work but as an aspect of it - work and leisure complement each other " . This observation obvious enough in itself is often overlooked when subculturalists especially seemingly bohemian PMC subculturalists are being analysed . Frith (1983:250-251) goes on to comment -

Leisure is necessary for capital , too ; it is the time when labor is replenished physically and culturally , re-creation time . . . Leisure is , on one hand , a source of fun and freedom and pleasure , a necessary counter to alienating labor ; but it must be , on the other hand , constrained and controlled and made trivial so as not to interfere with the labour process . . . Leisure from this perspective is not really free time at all , but an organization of non-work that is determined by the relations of capitalist production .

Frith (1983) points out the difference between disciplined 'respectable' or 'rational' recreation encouraged by the ruling class and its agents and hedonistic 'rough' or 'irrational' leisure which the ruling class , fearing it could provide the catalyst for wider public disorder has typically sought to discourage and strictly police . Rational recreation in contemporary Australian society takes forms such as involvement in sports , organisations such as the scouting and surf lifesaving movements and various community and charity organisations . Involvement in such activities meets widespread social approval and individuals participating in such activities are seen to possess a range of admirable traits such as community spirit , a desire for self improvement , selflessness , self discipline , competitiveness , the ability to work as part of a team etc . Employers will assess favourably those job applicants who can demonstrate they are involved in such forms of rational recreation and those who make a significant contribution to 'respectable' organisations and activities are frequently lauded in the media and rewarded through the honours system . Subcultural involvement does not fall into the gambit of respectable recreation . Subculturalist involvement is seen , especially by those with little association with subculturalists , as evidence of evidence of a range of negative traits such as anti-social attitudes , a wilful individualism and narcissism , laziness , a lack of respect for authority possibly even sexual deviance/promiscuity and criminal tendencies . Those prominently involved in subcultures are not lauded in the media or honoured within the community and it would appear those displaying evidence of subcultural involvement (unusual hairstyles , body piercings , outlandish clothing style) are discriminated against in the job market .

The (false) assumption made by many from Marxist academics to conservative employers is that respectable values (i.e ambition , a work ethic , an ability to defer gratification , self-control) cannot co-exist with what have been described as 'subterranean' values (desire for immediate gratification , spontaneity , hedonism) . The individual is presumed to be constantly either a sober careerist or dissolute hedonist - there is no recognition that an individual can balance both roles across , respectively , their work hours and leisure time . Matza and Sykes (1961) insightfully observed that subterranean values frequently co-exist with respectable values within individuals with the former allowed expression during certain periods - typically in the individual's leisure time . Brake (1985:55) in his summary of Matza work points out -

delinquent values , the seeking of excitement , toughness , disdain for work are in fact not so much deviant as typical of swashbuckling leisure values held by us all . We indulge in them during competition in games , drunken orgies , gambling and 'concealed deviance' . These are not countervalues but values shared with the dominant culture which in fact binds the delinquent to it .

Once a repressively desublimated consumer capitalist society came into being , subterranean values were to a certain extent actively encouraged . As Clarke et al (1976:64) point out -

Advanced capitalism now required not thrift but consumption ; not sobriety but style ; not postponed gratifications but immediate satisfaction of needs . . . the 'swinging' rather than the sober lifestyle .

PMC subculturalists like many others manage to skilfully and unproblematically balance the roles of leisure time hedonist and committed weekday student/worker skilfully and unproblematically . It is doubtful that PMC subculturalists are notably more hedonistic and committed to subterranean values than their non-subcultural peers - activities such as alcohol and drug consumption , dancing and pre-marital sex are hardly confined in contemporary Australian society to 'bohemian' PMC subculturalists . Similarly there seems little evidence (with the exception of the Ferals) that PMC subculturalists are notably less committed students or workers as a result of their leisure time subcultural activities . The hope or fear of various subcultural observers that leisure time hedonism would undermine weekday labour discipline seem unjustified . For example , it is worth noting that the Rave subculture - the most unashamedly and enthusiastically hedonistic of all the PMC subcultures - attracts a significant proportion of its membership from the corporate fraction of the PMC - upwardly mobile individuals with demanding , high status careers . It seems more accurate to argue that subcultural involvement (with the exception of the Ferals) is typically a form of escapist hedonism allowing the harmless cathartic expression of desires and 'magic' resolution of frustrations which might otherwise take an overtly political form .

9. Empowerment not resistance.

Grossberg (1992:95-96) calling into question Cultural Studies predilection for finding 'resistance' and 'struggle' within the cultural practices people enjoy asserts -

the fact that specific cultural practices are pleasurable , even empowering , does not tell us anything about the political valences of such pleasures , or the possibilities of articulating such moments to explicit political positions . . . Cultural analysis has to acknowledge , not only that "pleasure" , "resistance" and "struggle" refer to complex sets of concrete effects , but also that the relations among them are themselves complex and never guaranteed in advance . . . Empowerment - having a certain control over one's place in daily life - is not the same as struggle , the attempt to change one's conditions . And struggle is not always resistance , which requires a specific antagonism . And resistance is not always opposition , which involves and active and explicit challenge to some structure of power .

PMC subculturalists presumably derive some sense of empowerment from involvement in subcultures - as membership of these groups is completely voluntary there would seem little reason for an individual to become and stay involved in such a group if they were not deriving pleasure and empowerment from their participation . However as has been discussed , only one PMC subculture (the least popular one) goes beyond more than providing its members with a personal sense of empowerment . The vast bulk of PMC

subculturalists have remained politically quiescent failing to engage in struggle , resistance

or opposition .

ENDNOTES

[1] See Pusey , M (1991) <u>Economic Rationalism in Canberra</u> Cambridge University Press , Melbourne and Emy , H (1993) <u>Remaking Australia : The State , the Market and Australia's Future</u> Allen and Unwin , Sydney for an account for the pervasive influence of economic rationalist thought throughout Australian society since the early 1980s .

[2] Grossberg (1992) in examining the largely unchecked success of neo-conservatism in the U.S.A and throughtout the Western world during the 1980s and 1990s similarly argued that the New Right were successful in implementing their agenda not because the mass of people shared their values but simply because they encountered little resistance as the mass of people did not subscribe to oppositional values either .

[3] see for example Walker (1996) for evidence of drug use within the Australian Indie subculture , Riley (1992) for evidence of drug use within the Australian Gothic subculture , Murphie and Scheer (1993) for evidence of drug use within the Australian Rave subculture and Whittaker (1996) for evidence of drug use within the Feral Subculture .

CHAPTER FIVE

Style and Subjectivity in Contemporary PMC Subculture

1. The Subjectivity Marketplace.

The move to an economically post-industrial , and , intellectually , largely post - Marxist environment , has seen a much increased interest in forms of subjectivity other than those derived from the productive and class system . 'New Times' call for new understandings of where people draw their sources of identity from and place their affective investments . Finding a credible explanation of the choice of a non-normative identity by PMC subculturalists is crucial in the construction of any serious account of PMC subcultures . The question of why some individuals opt for a subcultural identity is of great interest given the exponential increase in the number of PMC youth adopting such an identity instead of , or along side of , more normative ones in recent decades . It appears subcultural identities have become increasing common amongst PMC youth as other more traditional sources of identity become have become unattractive or unavailable .

Mindful of criticism of the one dimensional 'classist' nature of most consciousness surveys Baxter et al (1991) designed a survey which allowed respondents to rank which identity sources carried the greatest salience for them . Baxter et al (1991:290)

found that important identity sources for Australian citizens were , on average , in order of salience - 'Family group member ' , 'Australian' , 'Occupation' , 'Gender' , 'State' , 'Ethnic background' , 'Town/District' , 'Age' , 'Religion' , 'Social class' , 'Member of a professional association ' , 'Supporter of a sports club' , 'Race' , 'Supporter of a political party ' and 'Member of a trade union ' . For a variety of reasons most of these normative identity sources are unappealing or not available to PMC youth . As is frequently observed by writers on youth and youth culture (see Frith 1983 , Brake 1985) youth , PMC or otherwise , having (typically) loosened ties with their own family yet not settled into a serious long term relationship with a partner are , with the possible exception of the single elderly , the social group least anchored to a family unit and least likely to regard their membership of such a family unit as a salient identity source . Investment in a national , state or regional identity appears to carry strong connotations of unsophisticated provincialism amongst Australia's PMC who have typically preferred to see themselves as internationalist cosmopolitans . In particular , a jingoistically nationalist identity is generally associated with the uneducated proletariat which makes such an identity an unpalatable to PMC youth . For similar reasons an identity revolving around support for a sports club is unattractive to PMC youth[1] .

Both the Feminist movement and more recently the Men's movement have drawn the overwhelming bulk of their support from the PMC . However while the proportion of the class for whom gender is an important identity source may be higher than is the case in other class locations , gender would appear to be a primary source of

identity for only a small proportion of PMC youth overall . Many members of the PMC are part of the Anglo-Celtic mainstream for whom a distinctive racial/ethnic identity is not available (unless articulated to a far right racialist politics) . A distinctive ethnic identity is available to non-Anglo-Celtic PMC youth but would appear to be unappealing for many second and third generation migrants who are highly assimilated . As previously discussed , a generational consciousness has not emerged amongst contemporary PMC youth . In a largely secular society , many PMC youth will have had no or at most perfunctory contact with organised religion throughout their lives while many who have had a religious upbringing will distance themselves from their religion either temporarily or permanently between their mid teens and early twenties . As previously discussed , PMC youth , especially those from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC , possessing cultural capital but typically lacking significant economic capital , do not appear to see themselves as having any firm class identity at all . Youth in general and PMC youth in particular tend to congregate in poorly unionised occupations and hence the trade union identity source is largely unavailable . Similarly it seems unlikely that membership of a professional association would be available as an identity source for more than a small minority of PMC youth . As discussed previously , while members of the PMC are disproportionately represented in political parties and movements overall , a fragmented Left obsessed with identity politics has failed to inspire much interest from the bulk of its natural constituency over the previous two decades .

One's occupation , or likely future occupation in the case of those still being educated , has traditionally been the most salient source of identity for PMC youth , especially for males . A wide variety of commentators (see Offe 1985 , Touraine 1984 , Gorz 1982) have argued that in a 'post-Fordist' economic environment occupational identity is increasingly diminishing in importance in people's lives . As previously discussed , Gorz (1982) has argued that the majority of the workforce now constitute a 'post-industrial neo-proletariat ' which involved in insecure , low skill , unfulfilling employment cannot feel any involvement in , or identification with their work and no longer bases their sense of identity on their productive role as the skilled proletariat of yesteryear supposedly did . Echoing Gorz's observations , Mackay (1993) has argued that there is a trend towards declining affective investment in employment amongst Australian citizens , a phenomenon he labels the 'unemployment mentality ' . Mackay (1993:102-103) writes -

rather than seeing the shrinking job market as a reason to feel more committed to a particular job , a kind of 'unemployment mentality ' is beginning to spread . . . Even among those who have work (but who face the possibility of periods unemployment , periods of part-time work , or a series of career changes through their working lives) , there is a tendency to look for meaning outside their jobs - in the family , in recreation , in hobbies or in other voluntary pursuits . Leisure takes on a new significance as the context for the search for a new sense of purpose which is unrelated to work .

As discussed in Chapter One , due to economic and educational changes that have been taking place since the early 1970s , there now exists a large number of overeducated , underemployed PMC youth who are reluctant to base their sense of identity on their productive role/occupational status . A wide range of theorists (see Parsons 1964 , Frith 1983 , Bourdieu 1984 , Brake 1985) have observed that those temporarily or permanently lacking in economic capital and social status will often attempt , in the leisure sphere , to construct an identity alternative to that which they are ascribed by their occupational role/class position . It appears that increasing numbers of youth from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC have been doing exactly that as their economic position has progressively weakened since the early to mid 1970s .

The majority of PMC youth will never look to the Gothic , Rave , Feral or Indie subcultures as a source of meaning , identity and pleasure . Many PMC youth are still willing and able to derive a sense of identity from their productive role and/or religious beliefs and/or participation in some form of politics and/or membership of a family unit of some type. Others will focus on their ethnicity , gender and/or sexuality in constructing their identity . Some will even structure their leisure and sense of identity around involvement in some type of sport , hobby or community organisation . Nonetheless for a minority of PMC for whom traditional sources of identity are unappealing or unavailable youth subcultures provide something to fill what might be

described as the subjectivity vacuum of post-industrial , post-religious , post-ideological ,

postmodern society .

2.Subcultural subjectivity.

Postmodern theorists , such as the British 'New Timers'[2] are enthusiastic

proponents of the thesis that individuals possess a large and diverse , even conflicting , set

of subjectivities . This from Mort and Green (1988:32,33) is typical -

we carry a bewildering range of different and often conflicting

subjectivities around with us in our heads at the same time . And there is a continual

smudging of personas and lifestyles , depending on where we are operating (at work , on

the street) and what cultures we move along . It is the speed , the fluidity with which

these identities merge and overlap which makes any notion of fixed political subjects

seem anachronistic .

We might expect , if the New Timers anti-essentialist , suitably schizophrenic and

'postmodern' conception of individual's subjectivities were accurate , to see the youthful

citizens of postmodernity flitting fluidly and rapidly in and out of and between different

subcultural subjectivities . This , however , does not occur . Feral , Gothic and Indie

subculturalists 'anachronistically' fail to display a decentred plurality of subjectivities and

those who have made a large scale affective investment in a subculture tend to have a relatively fixed subcultural identity .

Ferals rarely depart from a fixed Feral identity . They rarely have an occupational identity or an educational one . Most have minimal ties with both their families and the wider community and interact chiefly with other Ferals . No role , persona or lifestyle other than that of Feral subculturalist is typically engaged in . The situation with Gothic and Indie subculturalists though less extreme is similar . Gothic and Indie subculturalists , unlike their Feral peers , do not 'drop out ' and are often required to play a variety of conventional roles - family member , employee , student - in their daily lives . Nonetheless even when playing such mundane roles subculturalists are expected to maintain aspects of their subcultural subjectivity . Continued fidelity to the subcultural subjectivity regardless of what role one is playing , or what situation one finds oneself in , is required if one is to be seen as an authentic and legitimate member of the subculture . A Gothic or Indie subculturalist who only dresses and behaves as such during their leisure hours , whilst dressing/acting identically to conformist youth in their non-leisure hours while performing conventional roles , is liable to be derided and seen as illegitimate by their subcultural peers .

Hebdige (1979) sees the possession of subcultural legitimacy as a matter of chronology noting -

the distinction between the originals and hangers-on is always a significant one in subculture . Indeed , it is frequently verbalised (plastic punks or safety-pin people , burrhead rastas or rasta bandwagon , weekend hippies etc . versus the 'authentic' people) .

In fact , certainly in contemporary Australia and presumably in 1970s Britain , subcultural legitimacy is not tied to when an individual joined the subculture , (many Gothics and Indie subculturalists were yet to be born or infants when the subcultures they are now members of first appeared) , but rather how sincerely and consistently they embrace an appropriate subcultural identity . While it is not considered illegitimate to fulfil conventional roles , one's subcultural identity is supposed to remain primary and subculturalists often downplay the significance of their non-subcultural activities insisting that such activities play little part in defining who they are - even when , as is the case with full time employment , such activities consume a larger amount of their time than do subcultural activities . Permanent or semi-permanent non-disguisable and spectacular stylistic practices such as visible body piercings , tattooing , unusual hair stylings/colourings ensure that wherever they are and whatever role they are playing subculturalists are marked as members of a subculture and that this subcultural identity will be responded to in some way be those they interact with .

It is only the Raver subjectivity that appears to be fluidly slipped in and out of by PMC subculturalists . A large proportion of Ravers particularly those who are in the

upper half of the age demographic and/or enjoy high status , well renumerated employment seem to move into a subcultural subjectivity only doing Raves and display little trace of such a subjectivity at any other time . Other Ravers , especially those in their mid to late teens and those in the non-corporate fraction of the PMC do regard their participation in the Rave subculture as a primary source of identity which influences their entire life . Nonetheless , unlike the other three PMC subcultures , there seems little expectation that individuals must   display a rigorous commitment to a subcultural subjectivity in order to claim membership of , and be accepted as legitimate members of , the Rave subculture . For example while "Weekend Goth " is a term of abuse within the Gothic subculture , such an insult would make little sense in the context of a subculture revolving around leisuretime hedonism whose membership does not feel itself to be in a state of disaffected rebellion against and/or exile from the wider society in which they live .

Theorists (see Hall et al 1976 , Brake 1985 , Yinger 1982) have noted PMC subcultures/countercultures attract a more prolonged involvement than their working class counterparts which are typically participated in for only a couple of years by those in their mid to late teens . Brake (1985:95) notes -

The hippy movement provided for its members a moratorium of approximately five years in which to consider one's identity and relationship to the

world . This luxury , common in student cultures , is noticeably lacking in working -class life and working-class youth cultures .

It would appear the average length of participation in a PMC youth subculture is still around five years typically beginning in the mid to late teens and ending sometime between the early to mid twenties (though some individuals may begin and/or end their participation latter than this especially in the case of the Feral subculture) .

Moore (·1994) describes disinvestment from the Perth Skinhead subculture as frequently being a prolonged and complex process noting that many who leave the Skinhead subculture then move into the Mod or Teddy Boy subcultures or remain involved in the Skinhead subculture as 'ex-skin identities' - i.e individuals who have grown their hair and no longer wear skinhead clothing but who still patronise skinhead venues and participate with other skinheads in important subcultural activities such as brawling . Moore (1994:47) also observes an interesting phenomenon whereby even those who have departed the subculture will temporarily rejoin the subculture to participate in certain events such as soccer matches featuring visiting British teams .

No matter what one is stylistically when the visiting team plays , perhaps a mod or an ex-skinhead (if not 'out of it' for too long) , for that afternoon you are once again a skinhead . Out come the old boots , braces , bleached jeans . . . .

It would appear disinvestment from PMC subcultures is a gradual affair with subculturalists typically scaling back their involvement in significant subcultural events (gigs, raves etc) and restricting their relationships to fellow subculturalists less and less over a period of time rather than making a sudden dramatic break with their subculture . However PMC subculturalist typically retire from subcultural involvement altogether once they have disinvested rather than joining another subculture or continuing to remain involved in their old subculture as ex-Gothic , ex-Raver , ex-Feral or ex-Indie subculturalist 'identities' . The reason PMC subculturalists withdrawal from subcultural activity is more final and total than their Skinhead counterparts is presumably due to the fact that Skinheads typically leave their subculture in their late teens or early twenties with a number of 'unanchored' ,'liminoid' years ahead of them . In contrast PMC subculturalists withdraw around their mid twenties when the interest in , and often disposable income available for the type frenetic leisuretime socialising subcultures provide a vehicle for has typically begun to dissipate . The vast majority of active PMC subculturalists are unmarried and the majority are disinterested in entering serious long-term relationships . The single most important factor in the disinvestment from a subculture would appear to be the subculturalist becoming involved in a stable committed relationship . In Britain market researchers Mintel (1990 and 1992) found single people were ten times more likely to be frequent clubbing ravers than married people . It seems likely that the situation in Australia is similar not just in the Rave subculture but in all PMC subcultures . A more serious approach to , and affective investment in , employment would also be a factor in withdrawal from subculture . It appears that those who fail to

age out of PMC subcultures and remain involved into their late twenties and thirties are typically those without occupational status and unencumbered by a marital or de facto relationship and/or children . Thornton (1995:102) has observed -

> *youth are not as anchored in their social place as those younger and older than themselves . By investing in leisure , youth can further reject being fixed socially . They can procrastinate what Bourdieu calls 'social ageing' , that 'slow renunciation or disinvestment ' which leads people to 'adjust their aspirations to their objective chances , to espouse their condition , become what they are and make do with what they have ' (Bourdieu 1984:110 -111). This is one reason why youth culture is often attractive to people well beyond their youth . It acts as a buffer against social ageing - not against the dread of getting older , but of resigning oneself to one's position in a highly stratified society .*

Shifting one's allegiances between subcultures , something that Moore indicates is common amongst British migrant youth in Perth , does not appear to be common amongst PMC subculturalists who generally remain loyal to the one subculture . Simultaneous involvement in two or more subcultures does not appear to occur . Where PMC subculturalists do shift their allegiances from one subculture to another there does not appear to be any particular pattern to such movements . What might be termed 'subcultural migration ' appears to occur on a significant scale only when a new subculture first emerges and members of pre-existing subcultures shift their allegiances to it . Walker

(1996) and Turner (1992)[3] both suggest a significant number of Indie subculturalists became Ravers in the late 1980s . Similarly it seems likely that in the mid to late 1970s many loosely involved in what remained of the Counterculture became involved in the Indie and Gothic subcultures .

3. Contemporary subculture - all style , no substance ?

As part of the widespread revisionism that has occurred since the early 1980s some theorists now argue that many groups labelled subcultures are not in fact subcultures in the strictly sociological sense of the term because in all but musical preference and appearance their membership is normative . This revisionist school of thought , influenced by post-structuralist theory , sees subcultural style as just another empty signifier in a world of empty signifiers , something arbitrarily displayed by a diverse range of people who do not necessarily share a common class location , race , age , life experience , politics or worldview . In this view all that the groups labelled subcultures really are is style collectives . Some revisionist theorists argue that in the case of subcultural style the signifier-signified relationship has never been as straightforward as assumed while others argue that it once was straightforward but was thrown into chaos by the arrival of punk .

Ehrich (1993) in "Youth Subculture - Does it exist in the Real World ? " is dismissive of the assertion that youth subcultures are distinct social groups with non-normative values and lifestyles . Ehrich (1993:31) argues that "very often" all that unites members of a subculture and differentiates them from non-subculturalists is "identification to a semantic code " and goes on to assert -

I argue that members of subcultures lack any significant differences in terms of values , behaviour and action in terms of the prevailing set of norms . I would go as far as to suggest that in many cases , so called subcultural groups reinforce the prevailing set of norms and can be considered prime components .

Ehrich (1993:33) goes on to pose the question -

Is the young woman clad in leather with a spiky hairstyle a punk who is responding to her subordinate status . . . Or is she merely an advocate of the dominant meaning system , a prime exponent of the middle classes who is occasionally prone to indulging a bondage fetish in her free time yet with the coming Monday morning will fix her hair , slip into an expensive set of clothes and head for her office .

Tait (1993:1,2) has expressed similar concerns about how -

a diverse group of individuals are transformed into , and positioned as ,

a discrete entity , seemingly with specific codes of behaviour and ways of relating to the

outside world .

As Ehrich (1993) and Tait (1993) confine their remarks to the present it is unclear

whether their cynicism about subcultures pertains only to contemporary examples or to all

post war ones . This distinction is made clear in the work of Chambers and Redhead .

Chambers (1986) argues that throughout the 1950s and 1960s , it was

reasonable to assume that those wearing a subcultural style occupied a subordinate

structural location (and presumably possessed a certain type of youthful working class

consciousness) but that the semiotic state of play has become more byzantine since the

emergence of Punk . Chambers (1986:207) claims that homologies previously posited

between " the housing estate , a dead-end job , Brylcreemed hair , a crinoline skirt , and a

Presley record " were accurate enough but -

the more recent rhetoric of subcultural insubordination has suggested less

direct , more complex connections and contexts . Since punk confused the signs of music

and dress in its self parodying , media-conscious collage we have learnt that the social

metaphors a subculture employs (its choice of music , clothes , drugs -its 'style') can

rarely be reduced to a single or unambiguous source .

Chambers (1986) seems to believe that while subcultural style may be articulated to a non-normative set of values and lifestyle and or subordinate structural location this is not necessarily the case and positing such homologies in relation to contemporary post-punk subcultures is a difficult and dangerous task .

Redhead (1990:10-11) takes a more extreme position arguing that authentic youth subcultures have never really existed . He observes -

It is primarily the messages of its own cultural force - to bind disparate populations in 'community '. . . which rock discourse has set up as the crucial criteria for success . Its fulfilment of this regime of effectiveness has been , frequently , judged in terms of yoking successive notionally rebellious youth subcultures . . . to specific musical forms .

Redhead (1990:25) claims the 1980s saw -

the break up not simply of former theoretical traditions (or master and meta-narratives) about the emancipatory potential of youth in the West , but the disintegration and restructuring of those formations (rock culture , youth culture) which were produced as their object . 'Authentic ' subcultures were produced by subcultural theories not the other way around .

Redhead (1990:75) goes on to observe -

> *standard ways of reading the relations between subcultures , youth culture , pop and deviance in particular social formations dissolved in the 1980s as the fixed identities and meanings of youth styles gave way to a supposed fluidity of positions , poses and desires and a much hailed (in postmodernist circles) transitory , fleeting adherence to lifestyles - for some theorists , the sign of postmodernity .*

As indicated by Redhead , a suitably postmodern conception of the contemporary citizen as lacking any class or political identity , rapidly adopting and discarding a range of diverse styles , none of which signify allegiance to any lifestyle or set of values is much in vogue amongst cultural studies academics . However there seems little evidence at least in Australian society to support these theorists' characterisation of subculturalists . The current debate over the meaning , or rather non meaning of subcultural style recalls Chambers (1986:216) remark that -

> *if an intellectual will can reduce all social , cultural and political life to the reductive mechanics of 'class struggle' , it can equally transform them into Baudrillard's negative sociology of the sign invasion of the world where differences are reduced to indifference and we all become objects of a meaningless and uncontrollable semiotics .*

The idea that subcultural styles , like other fashion styles , are somehow unproblematically available to a mass market and are wont to be appropriated by a heterogenous range of individuals is not borne out by experience . Both the Gothic and Feral styles have remained the property of a very small group of relatively homogenous (in terms of class , age ,worldview and ethnicity) individuals who regard themselves as and are regarded by others as members of a subculture . These individual's adherence to the style is anything but transitory and fleeting , typically lasting anywhere between 2-5 years . The situation is more complicated with both the Indie and Rave styles which have both been subject to 'commodity incorporation' . Aspects of both the Rave and Indie styles have been appropriated by conventional youth who are not members of , nor are necessarily even interested in the subcultures from which they have appropriated certain stylistic practices . These 'non-subculturalist stylists' are typically around the same age as their subcultural peers but apart from this may have little in common with them . If all those displaying aspects of either Rave or Indie styles were surveyed , especially at the height of these style's mass appeal we would indeed find the wearers of these styles were a diverse group of individuals with little in common other than identification with a semantic code . A distinction must be made however between those who adopt aspects of the style and those who consider themselves and are considered to be part of a subculture . While the non-member 'stylists' may be heterogenous Indie and to a lesser extent Raver subculturalists are relatively homogenous .

The Ferals are the clearest refutation of the argument propagated that subcultural style is an empty signifier and that a non-normative appearance is not articulated to a non-normative lifestyle with subculturalists lacking "any significant differences in terms of values , behaviour and action in terms of the prevailing set of norms" (Ehrich 1993:31) . It is difficult to imagine how Feral values , behaviours and actions could be any more non-normative and countercultural . Similarly the dark romantic values and bohemian behaviour of wearers of the Gothic style could hardly be regarded as normative . Indie subculturalists are less clearly differentiated from their non-subcultural peers in terms of their lifestyle and behaviours but typically hold a moderately bohemian 'anti-bourgeois' set of values . It is only the Rave subculturalists whose value systems and lifestyles are , leaving aside enthusiastic drug use , typically normative and no different from their non-subcultural peers . There is little evidence , except in the case of Rave subculturalists , to support Ehrich's suggestion that subcultural style is , as in the case of her imaginary officeworker - bondage fetish indulging Punk , adopted as some type of leisuretime indulgence or catharsis by those from the corporate fraction of the PMC .

The contemporary Australian situation would seem to suggest that subcultures are empirical facts rather than the constructions of over-excited theorists . Subcultural style is not , except to some degree in the case of the Rave subculture , an empty signifier ; rather it is typically articulated to a more or less non-normative worldview . The Gothic , Feral and Indie styles are earnestly straightforward signalling their wearers distinction from their non-subcultural normative fellow citizens .

4. Decoding Style.

No aspect of subculture attracts more excited attention from theorists , whatever their theoretical and political allegiances , than style . When it comes to decoding or 'reading' subcultural styles there are three distinct approaches which might be termed the Marxist , Post-Marxist and the Post-structuralist . The Marxist approach is the approach made famous by the CCCS , especially writers such as (P)Willis (1978) and Hebdige (1979) , who making use of the concept of homology wrote in great detail about the process of subculturalists appropriating commodities which were then made to "reflect , resonate and sum up crucial values , states and attitudes for the social group involved " (Willis 1978:11) . This approach was a Left culturalism in which culture was seen as the expressive form classes/groups gave to their social and material experiences and subcultural style was seen as articulated to the structural location occupied by youthful members of various fractions of the working class . The main goal of these theorists was to demonstrate how the various items making up a subcultural style reflected and/ or symbolically attempted to transcend the class position of its wearers . If this approach were to be pursued in relation to contemporary PMC subcultures the Indie and Feral styles would no doubt be presented as reflecting the downwardly mobile state of those members of the non-corporate fraction of the PMC who wear these styles . Articulating the items making up the Rave and Gothic style to any particular class location would however be a far more problematic task .

The 1970s CCCS approach is now out of favour with many contemporary cultural studies academics and has been replaced by the Post-Marxist approach . This is similar to the politically progressive Marxist approach but reflecting the current fixations of the Academic Left tends to search for a feminist and/or gay and/or ethnic consciousness rather than class consciousness within subcultural style . (S) Willis (1993:382) has observed -

The predominant trend in cultural studies is to focus on a particular phenomenon . . . and to isolate this practice in terms of its consequences for a politics of gender , while failing to recognize that . . . style practices engage larger social and economic structures .

If this approach were taken with contemporary Australian PMC subcultures , the highly sexualised female dress common in both the Gothic and Rave styles would presumably lead to questions over the feminist , post-feminist or possibly even anti-feminist consciousness of young PMC females ; while the effeminate style of male Gothics might be taken as indicative of a 'transgressive' disavowal of traditional gender and sexual identities amongst PMC males . However the majority of style-practices amongst PMC subculturalists which carry no obvious consequences for sexual politics would be overlooked in such approach .

Middleton (1990:164) senses in Hebdige's <u>Subcultures : The meaning of style</u> a "latent desire to leave the rigours of homological analysis and class expression behind in order to enjoy the transient details of the stylistic bricolages themselves ". This is precisely what a post-structuralist approach to decoding style typically does . In contrast to the Left culturalism of the CCCS the post-structuralists see individuals as operating within relatively autonomous and immutable spheres of culture and argues "cultural forms are the producers not the products , of experience " (Brake 1985:186). As previously discussed , post-structuralists tend to see style as an empty signifier unarticulated to any specific social group or political consciousness . In this view , subcultural stylists are seen as just disobedient or inventive consumers . What actual progressive political significance there is in using commodities in ways other than those envisaged and endorsed by their makers has not been made quite clear by post-structuralists but this bricolage is nonetheless usually seen to be in some way subversive and worth celebrating . The relative disinterest in commodity consumption of Indie and Feral subculturalists and the straightforward nature of their styles provides little material with which to develop a post-structuralist analysis . In contrast , the Rave style , with its postmodern pastiche and parody , most visible in its knowingly ironic referencing of 1960s Countercultural and 1970s disco kitsch fashion , would seem to lend itself better than any other youth style (subcultural or otherwise) presently in existence to a post-structuralist approach . Post-structuralists might also be interested in the contributions 1930s German Expressionist Cinema , 1960s American sitcoms such as <u>The Munsters</u> and <u>The Addams Family</u> and the spate of Gothic genre movies that emerged in the late 1980s/early 1990s have made in the

construction of the Gothic style as well as the incorporation of Christian and Ancient Egyptian Religious iconography into a style worn by individuals who are not (practicing) members of either of these religions .

Murdock and McCron (1976:205) , though writing in reference solely to the Marxist approach , highlighted the fundamental problem with all three approaches when they observed -

Subcultural studies start by taking distinctive subcultural styles and the groups who are involved in them , and then working backwards to uncover their class base . The result is an elegant and eminently plausible account of the homologous relation between cultural styles and structural situations . If this procedure is reversed however , and the analysis starts from the class location rather than from the cultural response , a serious problem presents itself , as it soon becomes apparent that the same structural location can generate and sustain a variety of responses .

More recently both Middleton (1990) and Harris (1992) have expressed similar concerns about homology theory . Styles , especially once the concept of polysemy is introduced can be seen to signify whatever the theorist believes should or would be the structural location , lifestyle and belief system of subculturalist stylists . Though the different contemporary PMC subcultural styles may lend themselves better to one or another type of decoding a skilled theorist could conceivably isolate one or a number of constitutive

elements of any one of these styles and use them to 'elegantly and plausibly' demonstrate that the wearers of that style had alternatively a class or feminist or apolitical consumerist consciousness .

Much attention , (see for instance Hebdige (1979) and Brake (1985)) , has been paid to how subculturalists , especially those who are not part of the first wave of supposedly self-conscious innovators , may be only partially aware or even completely unaware of what their style signifies . Rather less attention has been paid to how theorists with predetermined viewpoints and agendas are liable to produce partial readings or complete misreadings of subcultural style . It is worth noting that PMC subculturalists themselves , even when acquainted with cultural studies and semiotic theory , do not typically perceive their styles to carry the (grand) significance commonly attributed to them by theorists . Harris (1992:5) in teaching cultural studies courses to college students noted -

The reception of gramscian texts and readings in my own courses is interesting in that students often behaved completely contrary to my expectations . . . it was their cultures I was talking about , and I felt they should be flattered . . . However , those closest to the activities found it hard to take the contributions seriously : when we read Willis's descriptions of bikers and their 'piratical' style , on one occasion , or Hebdige's account of Punk as surrealism , they sniggered .

Similarly the author has never experienced a PMC subculturalist account for their style in anything approaching a 'Hebdigean' manner and has found such subculturalists react as sceptically as Harris's students when such a reading of their style is presented to them . This is not to argue that subcultural styles do not display evidence of a class , feminist or 'postmodern' consciousness on the part of their wearers and it is certainly feasible that even highly educated , self-conscious PMC subculturalists may be partially or totally unaware of what their style signifies . Nonetheless given the long history of partial readings and misreadings of post-war youth subcultural styles would seem wise to avoid bold , elaborate free-wheeling interpretations of subcultural styles .

A cautious , largely taxonomic , approach is less problematic . To state the obvious , subcultural style performs the function of indicating its wearer belongs to one particular social group while indicating they are not or are at least unlikely to be members of certain other social groups . Moore (1994:36) has written of skinheads -

Visual style provides the grammar of everyday interaction for the members of these groups . . . skinheads use visual style to organize their relationships , to recognize friend and foe , to categorize social types , and to signal their belonging . . . The wearing of skinhead visual style is the sign for the announcement of a categorical opposition to the mainstream world .

Moore's remarks on Skinheads apply equally well to Feral , Gothic and Indie subculturalists . Perhaps the most important aspect of all these three subcultural styles is that they differentiate their wearers from members of the respectable and conformist corporate fraction of the PMC . There does not seem to be much more to the downwardly mobile Indie style than this function . The Gothic style as well as differentiating its members from the corporate fraction of the PMC also through the incorporation of religious imagery , fetishistic and/or archaic clothing and ghoulish make-up indicates Gothics are dark-romantic bohemians . Similarly Feral style - Dreadlocks , bones inserted through the septum , feathers in the hair , tribal tattoos , minimal ragged clothing - expresses that Ferals are in exile from modern industrial society leading a primitivist lifestyle . Raver style does not , unlike the other PMC subcultural styles , seem concerned with differentiating its wearers out from the corporate fraction of the PMC as it frequently incorporates expensive items of clothing and jewellery . Rave style would appear to be based on the twin concerns of functionality and fun . Sneakers , loose lightweight clothing , and small backpacks rather than handbags , all make dancing for long periods more comfortable ; while sexually provocative and/or kitsch items such as platform shoes and T-shirts with juvenile or humorous design and slogans indicate an unabashedly hedonistic attitude .

5. Magic Resolution .

Cohen (1972:23) in his seminal article on working class subculture argued

"The latent function of subculture is this - to express and resolve, albeit "magically ", the

contradictions which remain hidden or unresolved in the parent culture ". Cohen's theory

of a subcultural magic solution was taken up enthusiastically by the authors of <u>Resistance</u>

<u>through Rituals</u> with Clarke et al (1976:47-48) arguing -

subcultures provided . . . one strategy . . . for negotiating collective

existence . But their highly ritualised and stylised form suggests that they were also

attempts at a solution to that problematic experience . . . subcultures . . . 'solve' but in an

imaginary way, problems which at the concrete material level remain unresolved .

Clarke et al (1976:48) then quote Althusser (1969:233-234) -

In ideology, men do indeed express, not the real relation between them

and their conditions of existence, but the way they live the relation between them and the

conditions of their existence ; this presupposes both a real and an 'imaginary', 'lived '

relation . Ideology then, is . . . the (over determined) unity of the real relation and the

imaginary relation . . . that expresses a will . . . a hope, or a nostalgia, rather than

describing a reality .

In various different papers in <u>Resistance Through Rituals</u>   Jefferson , Hebdige and Clarke offer explanations of the supposedly magic solutions attempted by the Ted , Mod and Skin styles .

A magic solution does not occur with the two most popular contemporary PMC subcultures . As usual it is the Rave subculture that least complies to CCCS theory . As previously discussed , Ravers typically occupy the type of materially comfortable position working class subculturalists , such as the Mods Hebdige (1976) examined , are able to obtain only imaginarily through style . The subculture as previously discussed holds little attraction for disaffected individuals frustrated by blocked opportunity structures . Members of the Rave subculture are not typically confronted with a class problematic requiring a magical solution . Rave style - being a melange of cheap and expensive , kitsch and functional items does not have any clear class connotations or suggest its wearer aspire to or perceive themselves to be occupying any specific class position . The Indie subculture is , unlike Rave , largely made up of disaffected individuals from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC . However there is no magic solution offered to the problematic facing members of the subculture in the subculture's style . Indie style suggests downwardly mobility and constrained material circumstances which is a straightforward expression , rather than attempted resolution , of the situation of Indie subculturalists . The style suggests a resigned acceptance , rather than any type of active response or reaction to a subordinate structural position .

The Gothic and Feral styles are both highly unconventional and their spectacular nature does appear to , to paraphrase Althusser , express a hope and/or nostalgia , rather than indicating the reality of their wearers' situation -i.e that they are citizens of a first world , largely secular , technologically advanced , late twentieth century society . The Gothic style with its capes , ballgowns and byronic white shirts , carries clear historical references and indicates a fascination with and nostalgia for an imagined pre-secular , pre-industrial medieval feudal Europe . Interestingly , the most common reaction to Gothics amongst laypeople is to relate them not to any actually existing social group or class location but to characters from television and film - in particular 1960s sitcoms such as <u>The Munsters</u> and <u>The Addams Family</u> - which take as their conceit a collection of characters pursuing an archaic lifestyle and holding bizarre non-normative values while still existing uneasily in a modern society . The problematic of an unattractive present position amongst individuals from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC has , in the case of Gothics led to nostalgia for an imagined past and a numinous extra-mundane world . Thus it could be argued that the Gothic style does provide an , albeit complex and oblique , magic solution to the class problematic faced by its wearers . However instead of symbolically claiming membership of a class location in the existing society the Gothic style proclaims membership of a fantastic imagined world thoroughly removed from the real one .

The Feral style also proclaims membership of a world far removed from the modern , first world one its wearers grew up in and are at least to some extent still

involved in . Feral style draws heavily on the imagery of pre-industrial tribal societies . Late Twentieth Century , Anglo-Celtic , educated PMC Ferals are a long way removed from the noble savages they idealise . Nonetheless they do typically attempt to lead a low-technology , anti-consumerist primitivist lifestyle so it is difficult to argue that the Feral style is fraudulent in the sense of suggesting that its wearers participate in a lifestyle which is in fact inaccessible to them . The problematic which faced the working class subculturalists the CCCS studied and now increasingly faces members of the non-corporate fraction of the PMC is put simply an inability to attain or maintain 'the good life' i.e - social status , attractive employment and material comfort . There is significant evidence to suggest that Ferals who typically subscribe to an anti-consumerist , Green-Left politics are uninterested in attaining , and relatively unconcerned by , their lack of employment and social status and have little desire to participate in consumer capitalism . This being the case it would seem Ferals are relatively unaffected by the problematic facing those members of the non-corporate fraction of the PMC with more conventional belief systems and ambitions . As Ferals are not dissatisfied with their subordinate structural location and have no wish to transcend it through style or any other means they do not appear to be in possession of a problematic requiring a magic solution .

ENDNOTES

[1] Baxter et al (1991:299) note "there is fairly strong evidence of a class patterning on this identity measure , the salience of one's state or particular geographic location increasing in proximity to a working class location . . . This particular class pattern is echoed in the scores for the 'sports supporter' identity "

[2] In referring to the British New Timers I am thinking of those writers associated with the journal Marxism Today who in the late 1980s confronted with a post-fordism and the continued success of Thatcherism called for a radical rethinking of the Left's approach . In particular , these writers , arguing that social class had decomposed and hence was no longer the main axis of politics insisted that Left theorists should focus more on the diverse range of identities and subjectivities individuals possessed rather than their productive role/class position . See Harris (1992) or Grossberg (1992) for a fuller discussion of the work of New Time theorists .

[3] Turner (1992:22) notes that many "alternative rock music fans"/ "inner city groovers" became "the nightclubbing yuppies of the late '80s " while Walker (1996:269) similarly notes that in the late 1980s Rock'n'roll was superseded by dance music in many of its inner-city strongholds .

CONCLUSION

1. A Final Reflection

Young people in the 1960 had experiences (experiences of war and politics) that intensified the conflict between public and private obligations , between freedom and responsibility . . . But the 1960s were exceptional . The 1970s meant a normalization of youth and rock too , as college students expressed , once more , a sober concern for grades and careers , as teenage culture was re-established around the new conventions of drug use and sexuality , as youth leisure , on campus and off , became simply a matter of partying . Youth was still being experienced (just as it had been in the 1950s) as a stage on the way to adulthood ; it no longer seemed to be a permanent gesture of defiance .

Frith (1983:194-195)

A fascination with the expressive practices of spectacular (predominantly British and working-class) male youth cultures was , therefore , a manifestation of the search for ' imaginary' solutions to contradictions of class , culture and gender experienced by an emergent , self-consciously progressive male intelligentsia .

Rowe (1995:4)

As Rowe (1995) and many others have observed , every analyst of subculture has his or her own agenda . It may be openly , even proudly , displayed or

remain relatively hidden but it remains ever present , informing , constructing and constraining the analysts' research and the conclusions drawn from it . It is hence appropriate that in concluding this thesis I provide as accurate as possible an account of the reasons for my own fascination with contemporary PMC youth subcultures and what objectives I was hoping to fulfil whilst undertaking this research .

Unlike most of the observers of youth subcultures discussed in this thesis I was not separated by barriers of class , education and age from the objects of my study . Though I was not and had never been a dedicated member of a specific PMC youth subculture I was , like the typical subculturalist I was studying , a young , well educated[1] , Australian , Anglo-Celtic PMC individual who felt uncatered for by a 'mainstream' Australian leisure culture revolving around sports , the beach , cars , suburban clubs and pubs , pop and pub rock music etc . I had much the same background , education , life experiences , aspirations and worldview as those I was studying and I faced the same problems and a similar future . This lack of distance from those I studied was predictably both the greatest advantage and disadvantage I possessed in attempting to produce a sober , accurate and insightful analysis of the Gothic , Rave , Feral and Indie subcultures .

In retrospect it seems my motivations were not dissimilar to those of the CCCS writers in mid 1970s Britain . In a conservative political climate I wanted to find a revolutionary subject and was inclined to press (PMC) youth subcultures into the role . I can perhaps be forgiven my naivety having been part of that generation of Australian PMC

youth which has , (see Davis (1997) , Maslen and Slattery (1994) and Gerster and Basset (1991)) , come of age being led to believe that its predecessors (baby boomer PMC youth) did indeed act as revolutionary subject of sorts throughout the late 1960s and first half of the 1970s , stopping the Vietnam war and (apparently singlehandedly) transforming a staid , insular , provincial , Anglophile , sexist , racist , homophobic , patriarchal , philistine society . It didn't seem possible all that youthful PMC radicalism just mysteriously disappeared circa 1975 . I was inclined to believe that it still existed but just took a different , more subtle form and that the various contemporary PMC subcultures were in their different ways worthy heirs of the Counterculture and indeed all the other radical PMC youth movements of the last two centuries .

Initially it seemed as if I would succeed in my project - everything seemed to incline contemporary PMC subculturalists towards radicalism . Firstly there was historical precedent - for 200 years sections of upper and middle class youth had been participating in groups which either explicitly (in the form of political activism) or implicitly (in encouraging its members to retreat from and/or defy the conventions of the host society) challenged the status quo . Non-conformist bourgeois youth , it seemed , had throughout its history displayed significant class consciousness - not on the basic level of identifying as a member of a class but in the sense of having a highly developed understanding of workings of social , economic and political institutions and processes and engaging in efficacious action to challenge and change these institutions and processes .

Secondly , the dire economic situation of contemporary PMC youth seemed to be perfectly designed to engender radicalism . 'Generation X ' seemed to be a case study par excellence in relative deprivation and status inconsistency - the best educated generation in Australian history consigned to unemployment , underemployment and frustrated aspirations . If Australian Counterculturalists could be so dismissive and damning of capitalism at a time when it was delivering full employment , rapidly rising wages and living standards and general upward mobility across society then surely their successors would be even more critical of capitalism when it was conspicuously failing to deliver any of these things .

However contemporary PMC subculturalists , with the exception of the Ferals , recalcitrantly failed to display the 'correct ' attitudes . Most had some knowledge of , at least , post-war non-conformist middle class groups such as the Beats and Hippies but it didn't seem to occur to them they should emulate the tactics (such as dropping out or engaging in political activism) of these groups . Most , if still holding out some hope that they personally would eventually secure some type of satisfying career , were under few illusions about the reality of their economic position ; yet resigned acceptance of the situation seemed far more common than involvement in political activism to change it .

Many contemporary PMC subculturalists , (though by no means all) , displayed the (politically) 'correct' progressive attitudes on specific issues such as feminism and homosexuality but were surprising lacking in the type of class consciousness

their predecessors such as the Counterculturalists possessed . I was constantly surprised at just how uninformed and seemingly disinterested highly educated individuals were about the workings of the society they inhabited . The only type of class consciousness I was exposed to from PMC subculturalists was disheartening - a sneering contempt for and constant denigration of working class culture and working class individuals paradoxically coupled with an impotent anger towards , and barely disguised envy and resentment of , not the ruling class , but the corporate fraction of their own class . Thornton (1995:165-166) has written of the British Ravers she studied :

Unlike Young's hippies and Hebdige's punks , then , the youth of my research were , to cite the cliche , ' Thatcher's children ' . Well versed in the virtues of competition , their cultural heroes came in the form of radical young entrepreneurs , starting up clubs and record labels , rather than the politicians and poets of yesteryear .

I find the argument put by Thornton (1995) and others that youth , even putatively non-conformist subcultural youth , have adopted the New Right values that have been so prevalent in the societies in which they have come of age unconvincing . I certainly came across no Australian PMC subculturalists calling for a dismantling of the welfare state , user pays education and health care or arguing that the free hand of the market should reign unencumbered by government regulation . Australian PMC subculturalists , with the exception of the Ferals , seem more confused than conservative . Perhaps they are best described as ' Foucault's Children ' , not committed to the capitalist

system that has served them so poorly but unconvinced they can do anything to improve on it .

The PMC subculturalists I came in contact with were insistent that they were 'alternative' - that they were in exile from , even in active conflict with , a 'mainstream' Australian culture . I wanted to believe they were indeed subversive and offered affronts to 'bourgeois hegemony' but , with the exception of the Ferals , I searched in vain for any subcultural practices that posed any threat to the status quo and those groups seeking to maintain it . Reluctantly - within my initial frames of reference - I had to conclude that Indie , Gothic and especially Rave subculturalists were little more than apolitical bohemians . The radicalism of the Ferals was more inspiring but it had to seen in context - the Feral subculture was relatively unpopular with PMC youth - attracting only a fraction of the support the Rave and Indie subcultures enjoyed . Unlike the Counterculture of the 1960s/70s , the Feral subculture has had little impact on its host society over the course of its development and , at the time of writing , with moves to limit and strictly police welfare payments , its continued existence seems uncertain .

I had hoped to debunk the notion that my generation were epigoni and to write a 'secret history ' of resistant youth subculture in the period between 1975 - 1995 . Unfortunately given the available evidence no such romantic account was possible . It seems that youthful PMC radicalism in Australia did largely evaporate around the mid 1970s after all . A worthy heir to the Counterculture (i.e an oppositional PMC youth

movement with a sufficiently large membership to affect change to its host society) is yet to be born . At the present time , given the situation described in Chapters Two and Three , there seems little prospect of such a movement coming into existence at any time in the near future .

2.Where to now ?

Differences in analytic approach are also related to the political persuasion of the writer , their position on the conservative-liberal-radical continuum , and to a certain extent upon whether or not they are motivated by a desire for social change . . . The study of youth subcultures and the lifeworlds of young people is informed by a diversity of values and objectives . For some , the task is simply to understand , to gain knowledge "for its own sake " . For others , research . . . is linked to exposing the features and contours of youth experience in order to enhance the development of youth policy . . . For others , analysis is in itself a form of dissident writing , the goal of which is to raise consciousness and to prepare the way for collective liberation . . . The politics of the writer is simultaneously linked to the interpretative framework adopted for analysing the world around them . . . Today , for example , much analysis is framed in terms of mid-range concepts and equivocal assessments of existing social , economic and political institutions . . . Post-modernist views tend to emphasise the relative nature of power , and the place of discourse in constructing the social world . Generally speaking , the practical focus and outcome of such youth studies is to locate change at the

individual or local group level , to argue that existing institutions are both "good" and "bad" in how they respond to young people , and to see reform in terms of personal opportunities and very limited or circumscribed political objectives . . . It may well be that explicitly radical , action-orientated perspectives - especially those linked to Marxism . . . are no longer trendy , accepted or acceptable in mainstream academic forums or that they no longer feature strongly in the present academic literature . But it would seem that values - driven , structuralist analyses . . . have much to offer in a world beset by moral uncertainties , massive inequalities , oppressive and alienating lifestyle options , and wide-scale political disillusionment .

White (1993:viii-ix)

Before proceeding to proffer some suggestions as to what might be productive lines of inquiry for future studies of Australian youth subculture it is appropriate to highlight two areas which do not appear to merit much further investigation . The British popular press exhibits a great fascination with youth subcultures and British theorists exhibit a great fascination with the reactions of the media to youth subcultures . CCCS writers such as Hebdige (1979) wrote at length about the insidious process by which the media supposedly managed emasculate youth subcultures . More recently Thornton (1995) has taken a revisionist position that youth subcultures almost from the moment of their genesis are involved in a dialectical relationship with the media and that tabloid demonisation of a youth subculture is in fact necessary if that subculture is to develop and become widely popular . Fascinating as moral panics and the debates

surrounding why they occur and what they achieve may be , the issue has little relevance to the Australian situation . As has been previously noted , the mass media has shown remarkably little interest in Australian PMC youth subcultures . Australian PMC youth subcultures typically are born , develop and die largely free from media attention so arguments about the popular press playing a role in either developing or destroying the subculture have little relevance in the Australian youth subculture . In those exceptional cases where an Australian PMC youth subculture does receive some attention from the mass media it is hard to detect it having any significant effect . For instance the sensational tabloid media reporting around the putatively Ecstasy related death of Anna Wood in 1995 does not appear to have had any significant impact on the Rave subculture . Given the lack of media attention Australian PMC youth subcultures receive , and the lack of impact that attention has on these subculture there seems little point in Australian researchers emulating their British counterparts in conducting in depth analysis of media representations of PMC subcultures and subculturalists and the effects of such representations .

There also seems little point in analysts of Australian PMC youth subcultures devoting a great deal of attention to the style of subculturalists . This is of course the aspect of subcultures which has typically fascinated the general public , journalists and theorists but in the course of my own research I came to believe subcultural style is of little more than taxonomic significance . Certainly theorists in recent years (see for example Middleton (1990) and Harris (1992)) have called into question elaborate

readings of subcultural styles whilst PMC subculturalists themselves are typically insistent that adopting a certain style is a relatively unimportant aspect of being a subculturalist . It is , in the authors opinion , particularly patronising and unrealistic to suggest that PMC subcultural styles may have some grand subversive significance which its wearers remain mysteriously unconscious of .

Even leaving aside issues of the style and media response to youth subcultures which so preoccupied the CCCS writers there remains much work to be done . The most glaring problem facing those studying Australian subcultures is the paucity of studies that have been done on Australian subcultures . There are no Australian equivalents to the Chicago or Birmingham Schools and no Australian classic texts equivalent to <u>Delinquent Boys : The Culture of the Gang</u> and <u>The Delinquent Solution</u> or <u>Resistance through Rituals</u> and <u>Subculture : The Meaning of Style</u> . White (1993:viii) in <u>Youth Subcultures : Theory , History and the Australian Experience</u> bemoaned -

baring a few exceptions , there have been relatively few systematic accounts by Australian writers on the nature of youth subcultures as a general phenomenon , much less specifically in the Australian context . What there was tended to be focused on particular cultural practices within particular social and institutional settings , as in the case of education or delinquency studies .

Despite the very real influences of globalisation and cultural imperialism it is unrealistic to view Australian society , subcultures and subculturalists as simply facsimiles of overseas models and assume theory developed in relation to different societies can unproblematically be used to analyse the Australian situation . What is needed , if a fuller understanding of Australian youth subcultures is to be reached , is for a wide range of theorists from a wide range of disciplines to begin to take a serious interest in the phenomenon , conduct in depth research into it and develop theory which recognises the uniqueness of the Australian situation .

Clarke (D) (1980) has accused the CCCS of engaging in too dense a theoreticism based on too little empirical data . It is a charge that could be levelled at most analysis of subcultures that has been produced over the last quarter of a century . Debates around the worth of participant observation have tended to suggest theorists must choose either between an ethnographic approach which provides a mass of empirical data about the lifeworlds of those being studied , but fails to examine the relationship of the subculture to its host society , or a theoretical approach which does the reverse , analysing the subcultures' relationship to the wider society , based on a bare minimum of empirical data about the subculture . Rather than choosing either a theoretical or an ethnographic approach it would seem more sensible to opt for some happy marriage of the two . For the last quarter of a century the theoretical approach has been in favour and it is this , more than anything , that has contributed to misreadings of subcultures as theorists have cavalierly constructed elaborate readings with insufficient empirical data . Gathering as

much information as possible about subcultures before presuming to estimate their significance will not necessarily prevent theorists producing a misreading but obviously the more information available the less likely a misreading becomes .

The degree of contact between the analyst and the subculturalists he or she is studying which is possible and desirable will vary in every case , based on the particular characteristics of the researcher and his or her objectives and the characteristics of the subculturalists being studied . At the very least however , I would suggest that there is some basic data which it is necessary to gather before presuming to produce any type of in depth analysis of subcultures . This basic data should include the typical class position/occupation of the subculturalist's parents , the typical educational qualifications and class position/occupation of the subculturalist , the typical age range , gender , ethnicity of the members of the subculture , their political and religious opinions and activities (if any) and their favoured leisure activities . The typical subculturalists' sexual preference , marital status , present living arrangements , career aspirations , membership or non-membership of groups and organisations other than the subculture , and the discourses they have been exposed to , are also of interest . Of course many other questions are pertinent but at a bare minimum , the analyst should have a basic profile of the typical subculturalist based on the questions posed above before proceeding to make any claims for the subculture . Unfortunately in Australia neither academics , government agencies nor commercial organisations have shown much interest in subculturalists and there are , as far as the author is aware , no studies presently in existence providing data

about the membership characteristics of any PMC youth subcultures . Until such studies emerge researchers will have to go into the field and directly interview what they believe to be a representative sample of subculturalists in order to construct a profile of the typical subculturalist .

Two developments are necessary if a vibrant and fruitful debate about , and hence eventually a fuller understanding of , Australian subcultures is to emerge . Firstly theorists from disciplines such as psychology , musicology , political science and even theology which have traditionally demonstrated no or little interest in subcultures must bring their own particular talents to bear on questions involving the significance and function of subcultures . Secondly , cultural studies theorists must once again come to believe youth subcultures are as worthy an area of study as the other cultural phenomenon that have preoccupied them over the last fifteen years .

Psychologism remains a term of abuse amongst sociologists but it seems unlikely that purely sociological explanations focusing on factors such as the class location and occupation of the individual can alone explain involvement in subcultures . As noted in Chapter Three , sociological explanations have trouble accounting for why some individuals will choose to become involved in subcultures while the majority of their peers who are in exactly the same position choose not to . Or why individuals in exactly the same position will choose subcultures encouraging very different attitudes and behaviours . Interestingly , while theorists have overwhelmingly tended to opt for

sociological explanations in attempting to explain subcultures , lay people and subculturalists themselves typically offer psychological explanations . Laypeople frequently accuse subculturalists of narcissism ("they just dress that way to draw attention to themselves ") or a type of juvenile rebelliousness suggesting the main attraction of involvement in the subculture is to shock and dismay their parents and/or authority figures . Subculturalists themselves frequently complain of alienation insisting they are unwilling or unable to form relationships with either their 'normal' peers or fellow citizens in general and only feel comfortable and accepted amongst other members of the subculture .

Just as it would seem feasible to mix ethnographic and theoretical approaches to produce a fuller reading of subcultures so it should be possible to combine psychological and sociological methodologies to produce a fuller account of the motivations of subculturalists . Hamm (1993) has recently done exactly that in producing his fascinating analysis of American neo-nazi skinheads , using psychometric instruments such as the F Scale and Scrole's five-item anomia scale , to develop a detailed psychological profile of the typical skinhead . Research along similar lines to Hamm's should be carried out to discover if PMC subculturalists are any more narcissistic , immature , depressed , angry , alienated , pessimistic , introverted , prone to drug or alcohol addiction , subject to psychological disorders such as schizophrenia or paranoia or likely to have experienced a dysfunctional family environment than their non-subcultural peers . Though overall there are unlikely to be huge differences between the psychology

of subculturalists and their non-subcultural peers it seems conceivable that the Gothic

and , to a lesser extent , Indie subcultures may have a disproportionately high number of

depressive personalities amongst their ranks . It also seems possible that those suffering

psychological disorders may be attracted in disproportionate numbers to subcultures such

as the Ferals that stress non-conformity and display a greater than average tolerance to

non-normative behaviour . Until a psychological profile of subculturalists is constructed ,

it would seem that questions as to why individuals in the same location do or don't

become involved with particular subcultures shall remain unanswerable .

Grossberg (1992:301-302) has written that :

in the 1980s , both civil society and private life have collapsed into the

domain of everyday life and , as a result , the very possibility of lines of flight from

everyday life into the public arena of state and economic apparatuses is disappearing . . .

It is precisely the sense of helplessness in the face of political and economic relations

that justifies the retreat into everyday life ; if you can't change the world , change the

little piece of it within your constant reach . . . If it is too dangerous to care about the

world , too difficult to change it , care about everyday life , change your lifestyle . . . It is

not that politics is privatised but that it disappears from the perspective of those moving

within the transits of the everyday life .

Barring the Ferals , politics is surprisingly absent from the perspectives of

PMC subculturalists . As previously noted , youth from the non-corporate fraction of the

PMC , historically a highly politicised group , have since the mid 1970s become increasingly depoliticised and quiescent . The question of why this has occurred in Australia is a matter of urgent interest probably best undertaken by theorists with political science background . In Chapter Two I attempted to provide my own explanations for some of the main reasons for the depoliticisation phenomenon amongst Australian PMC youth but the subject warrants far more substantial analysis than I have been capable of . Such an analysis would examine the reasons why involvement in politics has become so unattractive to contemporary PMC youth ; why they have such a limited and confused grasp on political economy ; why their disaffection , which largely arises out of the flaws and contradictions of the capitalist system , does not take an overtly political form ; why PMC youth now tend to conceive of their problems as having an existential rather than a political cause and solution ; why despairing , relativistic and nihilistic postmodern and poststructuralist philosophies have been so enthusiastically embraced by the Australian (PMC) intelligentsia ; what effects exposure to poststructuralist/postmodern discourses has ; the reasons for the decline of the Left over the last two decades ; how the Left has managed to alienate or at least failed to attract members of it natural constituency , such as youth from the non-corporate fraction of the PMC ; the effects of unemployment and underemployment on political behaviour ; and why disaffected PMC youth perceive involvement in (largely apolitical) youth subcultures and making other 'lifestyle choices' as the only appropriate and/or possible response to political and social problems .

Many PMC subculturalists take a similarly personalised and unorthodox approach to religion as they do to politics . The New Age movement - one of the more economically profitable , long lasting and culturally influential legacies of the Counterculture - has influenced many PMC subculturalists , especially those involved in the Feral , Rave and Gothic subcultures . While it would be inaccurate to classify any of these subcultures as religious movements they have significant religious aspects . The most interesting question , best answered by a theorist with some background in theology and/or political science , is the effect of subculturalists' spiritual beliefs on their actions . The belief system of politico-religious groups such as the Diggers , Ranters and Heresy of the Free Spirit inclined members of these groups into more or less open revolt and defiance of authority (see Hill 1978) . It seems the animistic or at least quasi-animistic beliefs of the Ferals are an important factor motivating their radical environmental political actions .

Conversely the more conventional New Age beliefs of many Ravers may be a factor in their political passivity . The New Age movement seems far less suspicious and critical of Mammon than most mainstream religions and seems far less interested in attempting to transform society , either through charity or involvement in the political process , to make it more equitable and humane than other religious organisations . It typically seems to suggest that the root of all problems , individual and social , is a lack of , or distorted , consciousness and the solution to these problems is for individuals' consciousnesses to be raised . It is this type of worldview that seems evident in 'techno-

pagan' Ravers . Individual problems can be transcended and rendered insignificant if one raises ones consciousness with the aid of drugs , music and dancing with a temporarily assembled community at a ritualistic Rave . Similarly a ' consciousness revolution ' will occur and social problems miraculously disappear once a critical mass of people adopt the 'Peace , Love , Unity and Respect ' Raver mindset [2] . A similar type of thinking would seem to inform those Gothics interested in the occult , wicca etc who believe the best way to improve their life situation is literally by magic - that is participating in rituals , reciting spells , making offerings etc . There is a need for a theoretician with the appropriate background and skills to conduct research into what exactly are the spiritual philosophies informing the various PMC subcultures , where they have adopted these philosophies from , why they have adopted certain philosophies over others , what proportion of the members of the subculture subscribe to these philosophies and how intensely they do so and the effects of these philosophies on subculturalists lifestyle . The veracity of the claims subculturalists make about the spiritual significance of some of the practices they engage in should also be investigated .

The major weakness in my own analysis , and it is one shared by many other studies , is a lack of investigation into the role of music in subcultures . My own lack of musical training and knowledge inhibited me from going much further than noting the favoured genre(s) of music of subculturalists and what I perceived to be the main (lyrical) themes of these genres . This is hardly sufficient . Homological explanations of the type Willis (P) (1978) offered in <u>Profane Culture</u> of the role of certain genres of music in

subcultures have been frequently criticised (see for example Middleton 1990) but the questions such studies posed and attempted to answer remain . Probably the most significant issue revolves around to what extent musical discourses contribute to the construction of the subjectivity of subculturalists . Apart from basic questions of where , when , and how subculturalists consume music ; there are the more complicated issues of how central the consumption of a particular genre of music is to being a member of a subculture ; why youth subcultures cohere around certain genres of music and not others ; whether certain subcultures came before or after the emergence of a genre of music and , in the latter case , why a certain genre of music is appropriated by the subculture ; why certain individual artists and even whole genres of music may be both adopted and discarded over the course of a subcultures history ; whether or not the core values of the subculture are immanent and expressed in the music (and if so , how ?) or whether the music is just read this way by subculturalists ; why PMC subculturalists are so passionately invested in the idea that their favoured genre of music is somehow more authentic , legitimate and generally 'purer ' than other genres of music ; why genres of music such as techno , indie and gothic rather than , for example , jazz , folk or psychedelia , presently appeal to PMC youth ; how confined to subcultural audiences putatively subcultural genres of music are ; how subculturalists privilege their relationship to and uses of music over those of non-subculturalists ; how the lifestyle of subculturalists influences their choice of music and conversely how music affects the lifestyle of subculturalists . Much analysis of the genres of music favoured by PMC subculturalists , especially at the journalistic level , has been crudely homological - i.e grunge is portrayed

as expressing the rage and despair of ' Generation X ', techno as expressing the 'postmodern' consciousness of contemporary youth . There is , I suspect , some degree of truth in these simplistic generalisations but they are hardly sufficient explanations of the attraction of certain types of music to a certain social group . What is needed is for a theorist with the necessary skills to produce a substantial musicological analysis of the genres of music favoured by Indie , Gothic , Raver and Feral subculturalists of the type recently undertaken by Walser (1993) in relation to Heavy Metal and engage with the questions posed above .

That disciplines such as the ones referred to above have demonstrated little interest in subcultures is not particularly surprising - historically they have had other concerns far more central to their fields of study . What is surprising is that Cultural Studies , a discipline which to a large extent grew out of the work of the CCCS on subcultures (see Harris 1992) , has shown so little interest in subcultures since the early 1980s . The reason for this lack of interest can hardly be that subcultures no longer play any significant role , in youth culture in particular and popular culture in general , for , on the contrary , since the mid 1970s they have become increasingly popular (especially amongst PMC youth) and had an increasingly powerful affect (albeit more cultural than political) on the societies in which they exist . From a purely economic point of view subcultures are big business , playing a crucial role in the leisure and music industries across the Western world . For example the most popular genre of music in the U.S.A in recent years , accounting for 40% of all sound recordings sold by the end of the 1980s ,

was not some type of pop music but Heavy Metal (Walser 1993) . By 1993 , more than one million people were attending raves in the U.K each week diverting two billion pounds a year away from pubs (Marshall 1994) and since the late 1980s / early 1990s , self-consciously Indie artists such as Nirvana have enjoyed massive crossover success and in the process transformed the nature of the recording industry and youth and popular culture .

The reason for Cultural Studies' lack of engagement of a phenomenon which is such a vital part of contemporary youth and popular culture throughout the first world would appear to be that subcultures and subculturalists sit uneasily with the political preoccupations and theoretical agendas of Cultural Studies theorists .(S) Willis (1993:365 , 379-382) has commented :

That culture enjoys a dialectical relationship to the structures of capitalism is a critical concept that has been wholly overshadowed by the prevailing school of cultural studies . . . which celebrates the making of cultural meanings , in and of itself, as a radical form of politics . . . the tendency to see culture as discourse rather than dialectic has developed to a point where the great majority of critics writing today no longer pay even lip service to the material conditions of class . . . That culture enacts people's desire to solve the way capitalism shapes their lives is a concept that has been largely lost to cultural studies in this country , replaced by a facile , celebratory criticism . . . The problem with culture - and cultural studies . . . is the tendency to see culture as

autonomous , inflected or influenced by capitalism , but not its dialectical articulation capable of revealing the contradictions and relationships fundamental to capitalism . The predominant trend in cultural studies is to focus on a particular phenomenon - such as hardcore's feminization of military fashion - and to isolate this practice in terms of its consequences for a politics of gender , while failing to recognise that all of hardcore's often conflicting style-practices engage larger social and economic structures , many of which are not available to subcultural practitioners in a conscious political way .

Youth subcultures typically lend themselves poorly to the "facile celebratory criticism " Willis (1993) argues presently dominates Cultural Studies . For instance , subcultural style practices are only infrequently appropriately postmodern playful expressions of a feminist or gay consciousness . It is difficult to see contemporary PMC subcultures as anything other than the dialectical articulations of the consumer capitalism in which they exist . PMC youth interest and involvement in the Gothic , Indie , Feral and Rave subcultures is primarily due not to their gender or sexuality or desire to engage in bricolage for its own sake but rather their particular class position . The style practices of the Gothic , Indie and Feral subcultures are typically (albeit confused and unthreatening) reactions against larger economic and social structures - it is this that lies at the heart of subculturalists claims to alternative-oppositional status and their antipathy to the corporate fraction of their own class . PMC subcultures cannot be adequately theorised by reference to the gender and/or sexuality of their members , they can only be

adequately theorised with reference to the material conditions in which their members exist .

As long as the type of criticism which sees culture as a discourse rather than dialectic and regards manipulation of the cultural sign system , in and of itself , as somehow subversive remains prominent within Cultural Studies , subcultures will receive limited attention and no serious attempt to theorise the phenomenon , of the type undertaken by the CCCS writers in the latter half of the 1970s , will be possible . If Cultural Studies theorists do not demonstrate any interest , it is unlikely that those in other disciplines will either . What is needed if the field of subcultural studies is once again to attract the attention of more than isolated individual academics is a seachange in the theoretical and political preoccupations of Cultural Studies involving a return to a more economic determinist approach and an interest in the lives and cultural practices not just of feminists , gays and lesbians and certain ethnic groups but also of relatively normative , heterosexual Anglo-Celtic working class and PMC youth . Such a seachange could only improve the relevance and legitimacy of the discipline of Cultural Studies and encourage much needed analysis of a phenomenon which throughout the post-war period has become increasingly central to youth culture .

ENDNOTES

[1] I was 22 years old when I started researching the thesis in mid 1993 . Six months earlier I had completed a B.A .

[2] The following from Brown (1997) at http:/www.hyperreal.com/~mike/pub/altrave FAQ.html#definition is typical of this mindset -

raves and ravers do not discriminate across a colour line , on the whole . Everyone looks the same in the dark . . . It is a cliche , but let the music set you free . Then let the music join you together in peace and joy . It really works . . . PLUR is both the product of and the precursor to a successful rave . New ravers tend to get caught up in the Unity aspect as they are overwhelmed by the sense of solidarity among the many different people with whom they find themselves dancing . . . Some ravers are so committed to PLUR and the rave scene that they believe raves are instruments of social change . They believe the positive effects of raving are spreading into the lives of all involved , and in turn the people who come into contact with ravers are also affected in a positive manner . The extent to which raves affect people's lives and society at large is a difficult thing to measure , but it certainly deserves more exploration .

Brown is writing primarily in reference to American society . Note there is no analysis of the economic causes of conflict , atomisation , racial disharmony the Ravers are attempting to temporarily escape at Raves only the utopic hope that if enough

people either adopt the PLUR mindset or come in contact with people who subscribe to it

then beneficial social change will somehow automatically follow .

Bibliography

ABS (1994) <u>Australia's Young People</u> (National Youth Affairs Research Survey)

ABS (1994) <u>Australia in Profile : 1991 Census</u>

Abercrombie , N , Hill , S and Turner , B (1984) <u>The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology</u>
Penguin , London

Aitkin , D - (1977) <u>Stability and Change in Australian Politics</u> Australian National

         University Press , Canberra

      - (1982) <u>Stability and Change in Australian Politics</u> (revised edition) Australian

         National University Press , Canberra

      - (1996) "Do our universities pass the test " in <u>The Weekend Australian</u> (10/2)

Althusser , L (1969) <u>For Marx</u> Penguin Press , Allen Lane

Anderson , D (1992) " Access to university education in Australia 1852 - 1990 : changes
in the undergraduate social mix " <u>Higher Education Review</u> Volume 24 , Number 2 ,
Spring 1992

Ariel , N and Attwood , A (5/10/1987) "The Politics of Midnight Oil " <u>Australian Time</u>
(pp52-6)

Ashenden , D and Milligan , S (1995) <u>Good Universities Guide to Getting In , Getting</u>
<u>On , Getting a Job</u> Reed Reference , Port Melbourne

Austin , D (1984) <u>Australian Sociologies</u> Allen and Unwin , Sydney

Baker , J (1963) "Sydney Libertarianism " in <u>The Sydney Line</u> (quoted in Coombs , A
(1996) <u>Sex and Anarchy - The life and death of the Sydney Push</u> Viking , Melbourne)

Balzidis , D (1974) <u>Sydney Intellectual Radicalism - A Quest for Change</u> M.A thesis ,

Department of History , Sydney University

Battersby , M and Valtwies , M (1992) "Music Video , Marketing and Misadventure - A

Career Study of the Hummingbirds " <u>Perfect Beat</u> (v1 n1 July)

Baxter , J , Emmison , M and Western , J (eds) (1991) <u>Class Analysis and Contemporary</u>

<u>Australia</u> Macmillan , Melbourne

Bean , C (1988) "Politics and the Public " in Kelley , J and Bean , C (eds) <u>Australian</u>

<u>Attitudes : Social and political analyses from the National Social Science Survey</u> Allen and

Unwin , Sydney

Bell , D (1960) <u>The End of Ideology : On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties</u>

Collier , New York

Beyer-Berenbaum , L (1982) <u>The Gothic Imagination : expansion in Gothic literature and</u>

<u>art</u> Fairleigh Dickinson University Press , Rutherford (N.J)

Bocock , R (1993) <u>Consumption</u> Routledge , London

Bourdieu , P (1984) <u>Distinction : A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste</u> Harvard

University Press , Cambridge , Mass .

Bradbury , B , Doyle , J and Whiteford , P (1989) "Trends in the Disposable Income of

Australia Families 1982-3 to 1989-90 " . Paper presented to the AIFS Third Australian

Family Research Conference , Ballarat

Bradley , D <u>Understanding Rock 'n' Roll : Popular music in Britain 1955-1964</u> Open

University Press , Buckingham

Brake , M (1985)Comparative Youth Culture : The sociology of youth culture and youth subcultures in America , Britain and Canada Routledge & Kegan Paul , London

Braverman , H (1974) Labour and Monopoly Capitalism : The degradation of work in the twentieth century Monthly Review Press , New York

Brearly , D (1988) "Hummingbirds - New Heights and Nectar " RAM n338 10/8

Breen , M (1987) Missing In Action: Australian popular music in perspective Verbal Graphics , Kensington (Victoria)

Breen , M (1992) "Magpies , lyrebirds and emus : record labels , ownership and orientation " in Hayward , P (ed) From Pop to Punk to Postmodernism : Popular music and Australian culture from the 1960s to the 1990s , Allen and Unwin , Sydney

Broom , and Jones , F (1976) Opportunity and Attainment in Australia ANU Press , Canberra

Broom , L , Jones , F and Zubrzycki , J (1968) ' Social Stratification in Australia ' in Jackson , J (ed) Social Stratification Cambridge , Melbourne

Burgmann , V (1993) Power and Protest : Movements for change in Australian society Allen and Unwin , Sydney

Burgmann , V and Milner , A (1996) "Intellectuals and the new social movements " in Kuhn , R and O'Lincoln , T (eds) Class and Class Conflict in Australia Longman , Melbourne

Burke , A - (1995a) "Live too fast , fly too high " Sydney Morning Herald 30/10

- (1995b) "Club Twentysomething " Sydney Morning Herald 12/8

Carrington , K (1993) "Cultural studies , youth culture and delinquency " in White , R (ed) Youth Subcultures : Theory , History and the Australian Experience National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies , Hobart

Casimir , J (1995) "Defining Sydney's youth culture " Sydney Morning Herald 28/1

Castles , S , Kalantzis , M , Cope , B , Morrissey , M (1988) Mistaken Identity Pluto Press , Sydney

Chappell , H (1987) "Vault Face" Guardian 21/4

Chamberlain , C (1983) Class Consciousness in Australia Allen and Unwin , Sydney

Chambers , I (1986) Popular Culture : The Metropolitan Experience Methuen , London

Chappell , S and Garofalo , R (1977) Rock 'n' Roll is Here to Pay : the History and Politics of the Music Industry Nelson Hall , Chicago

Clanchy , J (ed) (1994) Making the Most Of Your Arts Degree - A guide for students in Humanities and Social Sciences Longman , Melbourne

Clare , J and Brennan , G (1995) Bodgie Dada and the Cult of Cool UNSW Press , Sydney

Clarke , D (1980) " The State of Cultural Theory " Alternate Routes vol 4 , pp106-56 , Carleton University , Ottawa .

Clarke , G (1982) " Defending ski-jumpers : a critique of youth culture" CCCS Stencilled Occasional Paper Sub and Popular Culture Series , SP No.71

Clarke , J (1976) " The Skinheads and the Magical Recovery of Community " in Hall , S and Jefferson , T (eds) Resistance Through Rituals Unwin Hyman , London

Clarke , J , Hall , S , Jefferson , T and Roberts , B (1976) "Subcultures , Cultures and Class : A theoretical overview " in Hall , S and Jefferson , T (eds) Resistance Through Rituals Unwin Hyman , London

Clarke , M (1982) The Politics of Pop Festivals Junction Books , London

Cloward , R and Ohlin , L (1960) Delinquency and Opportunity : A Theory of Delinquent Gangs Free Press , Chicago

Cohen , A.K (1955) Delinquent Boys , The Culture of the Gang Free Press , Chicago

Cohen , P (1972) "Sub-Cultural Conflict and Working Class Community " in Working Papers in Cultural Studies , No.2 (Spring) . CCCS , University of Birmingham .

Cohen , S - (1972) Moral Panics and Folk Devils MacGibbon & Kee , London

(1980) Introduction to the 1980 edition of Cohen , S (1972)

Cole , F and Hannan , M (1997) "Goa Trance " in Perfect Beat (v3 n3 July)

Connell , R (1977) Ruling Class Ruling Culture : Studies of conflict , power and hegemony in Australian life Cambridge University Press , Melbourne

Connell , R and Irving , T (1980) Class Structure in Australian History : Documents , Narrative and Argument Longman Cheshire , Melbourne

Coombs , A (1996) Sex and Anarchy : The Life and Death of the Sydney Push Viking , Melbourne

Corrigan , P (1976) "Doing Nothing " in Hall , S and Jefferson , T (eds) Resistance Through Rituals Unwin Hyman , London

Coughland , J (1992) "Patterns of Settlement in Australia of Indochinese Refugees " in Inglis et al (eds) <u>Asians in Australia - The Dynamics of Migration and Settlement</u> Allen and Unwin , Sydney

Coupland , D (1991) <u>Generation X : Tales for an Accelerated Culture</u> Abacus , London

Coyte , P (1985) <u>University - is it worth it ?</u> Hale and Iremonger , Sydney

Davis , M (1997) <u>gangland : cultural elites and the new generationalism</u> Allen & Unwin , Sydney

DEET (1991) <u>Ethnicity , Higher Education Series Report No.11</u>

DEET (1995) <u>Selected Higher Education Student Statistics 1994</u>

Deverson , J and Hamblett , C (1964) <u>Generation X</u> Tandem Books , London

Dilnot , A .W (1990) " The Distribution and Composition of Personal Sector Wealth in Australia " <u>Australian Economic Review</u> (1st Quarter)

Docker (1988) " 'Those Halycon Days ' : The Moment of the New Left " in Head , B and Walter , J (eds) <u>Intellectual Movements and Australian Society</u> Oxford University Press , Melbourne

Dorn , N and South , N (1989) "Drugs and Leisure , prohibition and pleasure : From subculture to the drugalogue " in Rojek , C (ed) <u>Leisure for Leisure</u> Macmillan , London

Douglas , L and Geeves , R (1992) "Music , counter-culture and the Vietnam era " in Hayward , P (ed) <u>From Pop to Punk to Postmodernism : Popular music and Australian culture from the 1960s to the 1990s</u> Allen and Unwin , Sydney

Downes , D (1966) <u>The Delinquent Solution</u> Routledge and Kegan Paul , London

Doyle, S (1995) "How to go Feral " <u>Hotwired</u> -

<http://www.hotwired.com/planet/95/48/howto.html>

Dusevic , T and Harari , F (1992) "Work , Work , Work " in The Weekend Australian (19/12)

Eco , U (1973) "Social Life as a Sign System" in D. Robey (ed) Structuralism : The Wolfson College Lectures 1972 Cape , Claremont

Ehrich , L (1993) "Youth Subculture : Does it exist in the Real World " Youth Studies Australia (Spring)

Ehrenreich , B and Ehrenreich , G (1976a) "The Professional-Managerial Class " Radical America 1,112 : 7-32

Ehrenreich , B and Ehrenreich , G (1976b) "The New Left : A Case Study in Professional-Managerial Class Radicalism " Radical America 1,113 : 7-22

Emy , H (1993) Remaking Australia : The State , the Market and Australia's Future Allen and Unwin , Sydney

EPAC (June 1992) Council Paper No.51 Unemployment in Australia

Esler , A (1971) Bombs , Beards and Barricades - 150 Years of Youth in Revolt Stein and Day , New York

Fagan , R and Webber , M (1994) Global Restructuring - The Australian Experience Oxford University Press , Melbourne

Fennell , T (1995) "Hot Gothic" HQ (January)

Finch , L (1993) "On the streets : Working class youth culture in the nineteenth century " in White , R (ed) Youth Subcultures : Theory , History and the Australian Experience National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies , Hobart

Foote , P (1993) " Like , I'll tell you what happened from experience . . . Perspectives on Italo - Australian youth gangs in Adelaide " in White , R (ed) Youth Subcultures : Theory , History and the Australian Experience National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies , Hobart

Forrester , L (1993) "Youth-generated cultures in Western Sydney " in White , R (ed) Youth Subcultures : Theory , History and the Australian Experience National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies , Hobart

Foucault , M - (1980) "Truth and Power " in Power/knowledge : Selected interviews and Other Writings , 1972 - 1977 Gordon , C (ed) Harvester Press , Brighton

- (1984) The History of Sexuality trans. R Hurley Random House , New York

Frankel , B (1984) " In defence of class analysis " Arena 66

Frith , S (1983) Sound effects : Youth , Leisure , and the politics of rock Constable , London

Friedan , B (1963) The Feminine Mystique Norton , New York

Fromm , E (1941) Escape from Freedom Rienhart & Company , New York

Fukuyama , F (1992) The End of History and the Last Man Free Press , New York

Gerster , R and Bassett , J (1991) Seizures of Youth : The Sixties and Australia Hyland House , South Yarra

Gillett , C (1971) The Sound of the City Sphere , London

Golby, J and Purdue, A (1984) <u>The civilisation of the crowd : popular culture in England</u>

<u>1750 - 1900</u> Batsford Academic and Educational, London

Gorz, A (1982) <u>Farewell to the Working Class : An Essay on Post-Industrial Societies</u>

Pluto Press, London

Gouldner, A (1970) <u>The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology</u> Basic Books, New York

Gregory, R (1992) "Aspects of Australian Labour Force Living Standards : The

Disappointing Decades, 1970 - 1990 " The Copland Oration, 21st Conference of

Economics, Melbourne

Gross, R.L (1990) "Heavy Metal Music : A New Subculture in American Society " in

<u>Journal of Popular Culture</u> 24, 1, Summer

Grossberg, L - (1987) "The politics of music : American images and British articulations"

<u>Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory</u> XI/1-2

- (1992) <u>we gotta get out of this place : popular conservatism and</u>

<u>postmodern culture</u> Routledge, New York

Hall, S and Jefferson (eds) (1976) <u>Resistance through Rituals : Youth subcultures in post-</u>

<u>war Britain</u> Unwin Hyman, London

Hamm, M (1993) <u>American Skinheads : The Criminology and Control of Hate Crime</u>

Praeger, Westport

Harris, D (1992) <u>From Class Struggle to the Politics of Pleasure - The effects of</u>

<u>Gramscianism on Cultural Studies</u> Routledge, London

Head, B and Walter, J (eds) (1988) <u>Intellectual Movements and Australian Society</u>

Oxford University Press, Melbourne

Hebdige , D - (1976) "The Meaning of Mod " in Hall , S and Jefferson , T (eds)
Resistance through Rituals : Youth subcultures in post-war Britain Unwin Hyman ,
London

- (1979) Subcultures : The Meaning of Style Methuen , London

- (1985) " The bottom line on Planet One " in Ten . 8 (19)

- (1987)Cut'n'Mix : Culture Identity and Carribbean Music Comedia ,
London

- (1988) Hiding in the Light Comedia/Routledge , London

- (1990) "Guilt Trips - Coming up against the wall " Art and Text no.36
May 1990

Hewison . R (1986) Too Much : Art and Society in the Sixties 1960-1975 Methuen ,
London

Hill , C (1978) The World Turned Upside Down Paladin , London

Horne , D (1980) Time of Hope - Australia 1966-72 Angus and Robertson , Sydney

Hughes , R (1993) Culture of Complaint : The fraying of America Oxford University
Press , New York

Inglis , C , Gunasekaran , S , Sullivan , G , Wu , Chung-Tong (eds) Asians in Australia -
The Dynamics of Migration and Settlement Allen and Unwin , Sydney

Jefferson , T (1976) " Cultural Responses of the Teds : The defence of space and status"
in Hall , S and Jefferson , T (eds) Resistance Through Rituals , Unwin Hyman , London

Kavolis , V (1993) Moralizing Cultures University Press of America , Lanham

Kelley , J and Bean , C (eds) (1988) <u>Australian Attitudes : Social and political analyses from the National Social Science Survey</u> Allen and Unwin , Sydney

King , J.E , Rimmer , S.M and Rimmer , R.J (1991) "The Law of the Shrinking Middle : Inequality of Earnings in Australia 1975 - 1989 " Discussion Paper , Department of Economics , La Trobe University , Melbourne

Kuhn , R and O'Lincoln , T (1996) <u>Class and Class Conflict in Australia</u> Longman , Melbourne

Leary , T (1971) <u>The Politics of Ecstasy</u> Paladin , London

Laclau , E and Mouffe , C (1985) <u>Hegemony and Socialist Strategy : Towards a Radical Democratic Politics</u> Verso , London

Lipset , S (1959) <u>Political Man : The social bases of politics</u> Doubleday , New York

Mackay , H (1993) <u>Reinventing Australia : The mind and mood of Australia in the 90s</u> Angus & Robertson , Sydney

Maley , K (1995) "Nasty trends are moving in next door " in <u>Sydney Morning Herald</u> (29/4)

Mangan , J (1991) <u>Distribution of Income and Wealth</u> Oxford University Press , Melbourne

Mann , M (1973) <u>Consciousness and Action among the Western Working Class</u> Macmillan , London

Mannheim , K (1952) "The Problem of Generations" in <u>Essays in the Sociology of Knowledge</u> Routledge and Kegan Paul , London

Manning , A.E (1958) <u>The bodgie - A study in psychological abnormality</u> Angus and Robertson , Sydney

Marcus , G (1989) <u>Lipstick Traces</u> Secker and Warburg , London

Marcuse , H (1969) <u>An Essay on Liberation</u> Penguin , London

Markus , A (1994) <u>Australian Race Relations</u> Allen and Unwin , Sydney

Marshall , J (1994) "Zen and the Art of Techno-Hedonism" <u>Good Weekend</u> 6/8

Marshall , P (1992) <u>Demanding the Impossible : A History of Anarchism</u> Harper Collins , New York

Maslen , G and Slattery , L (1994) <u>Why Our Universities Are Failing - Crisis In The Clever Country</u> Information Australia , Melbourne

Matza , D and Sykes , G (1961) "Juvenile Delinquency and Subterranean Values " <u>American Sociological Review</u> 26

Maxwell , I and Bambrick , N (1994) " Discourses of Culture and Nationalism in Sydney Hip Hop " in <u>Perfect Beat</u> (v2 n1 July)

McDonald , J (1951) <u>The Bodgie</u> B.A. thesis . Anthropology Department , Sydney University

McFadden (1993) "Youth subcultures and resistance : Desperately seeking solutions " in White , R (ed) <u>Youth Subcultures : Theory , History and the Australian Experience</u> National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies , Hobart

McGregor , C (1997) <u>Class in Australia</u> Penguin Books , Ringwood

McGuinness (1997) "The truth about the rise of the New Class " in <u>The Sydney Morning Herald</u> (26/4)

McRobbie , A (ed) (1988) <u>Zoot Suits and Second-Hand Dresses : An Anthology of Fashion and Music</u> Unwin Hyman , London

Melechi , A (1993) "The Ecstasy of Disappearance" in S. Redhead (ed) <u>Rave Off</u> Avebury , Aldershot

Mercer , M (1988) <u>Gothic Rock Black Book</u> Omnibus Press , London

Middleton , R (1990) <u>Studying Popular Music</u> Open University Press , Milton Keynes

Miller , W (1958) "Lower-class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency " <u>Journal of Social Issues</u> (15)

Milner , A (1991) <u>Contemporary Cultural Theory : An Introduction</u> Allen and Unwin , Sydney

Mintel - (1990) Nightclubs . <u>Mintel Leisure Intelligence 3</u>

     - (1992) Nightclubs . <u>Mintel Leisure Intelligence 3</u>

Moore , D (1994) <u>The Lads in Action : social process in an urban youth subculture</u> Arena , Aldershot

Mort, F and Green , N (1988) "You've Never Had it So Good - Again ! " <u>Marxism Today</u> (May)

Murdock , G and McCron , R (1976) "Consciousness of Class and Consciousness of Generation " in <u>Resistance Through Rituals</u> (eds) S.Hall and T.Jefferson , Unwin Hyman , London

Murphie , A and Scheer , E (1992) "Dance parties : capital , culture and simulation " <u>From Pop to Punk to Postmodernism : Popular music and Australian culture from the 1960s to the 1990s</u> (ed) P.Hayward , Allen and Unwin , Sydney

Murray , M (1994) "Ferals - The Call of the Wild " Simply Living no.77 June-Winter

Murray , R (1978) The Confident Years Allen Lane , Ringwood

Neville , R (1971) Playpower Paladin , London

O'Donnell , M (1985) Age and Generation Tavistock , London

Offe , C (1985) Disorganised Capitalism : Contemporary Transformations of Work and

Politics Polity Press , Cambridge

Parsons , T (1964) Essays in Sociological Theory Free Press , New York

Peck , M (1993) Further Along The Road Less Travelled Simon and Schuster , New York

Peterson , R and Berger , D (1975) "Cycles in symbol production : the case of popular

music " , American Sociological Review , 40:158-73

Polk , K (1993) " Reflections on youth subcultures " in White , R (ed) Youth

Subcultures : Theory , History and the Australian Experience National Clearinghouse for

Youth Studies , Hobart

Poulantzas , N - (1969) " The problems of the capitalist state " New Left Review no.58 ,

pp . 67 - 78

- (1973) Political Power and Social Classes New Left Books , London

Pusey . M (1991) Economic Rationalism in Canberra Cambridge University Press ,

Melbourne

Redhead , S - (1990) The end-of-the-century-party : Youth and pop towards 2000

Manchester University Press , Manchester

- (1993a) "The End of the End-of-the-Century Party "in <u>Rave Off :</u>

<u>Politics and Deviance in Contemporary Youth Culture</u> (ed)

S.Redhead Avebury , Aldershot

- (1993b) "The Politics of Ecstasy " (ibid)

Rees , S (1995) "The Fraud and the Fiction " in Rees , S and Rodley , G (eds) <u>The Human</u>

<u>Costs of Managerialism : Advocating the Recovery of Humanity</u> Pluto Press , Sydney

Reynolds , S (1988) "Against Health and Efficiency : Independent Music in the 1980s " in

McRobbie , A (ed) <u>Zoot Suits and Second-Hand Dresses : An Anthology of Fashion and</u>

<u>Music</u> Unwin and Hyman , London

Rietveld , H (1993) "Living the Dream " in Redhead , S (Ed) <u>Rave Off</u> Avebury ,

Aldershot

Riley , V (1992) " Death rockers of the world unite! Melbourne 1978-80 - punk rock or

no punk rock ? " in Hayward , P (ed) <u>From Pop to Punk to Postmodernism : Popular</u>

<u>music and Australian culture from the 1960s to the 1990s</u> Allen and Unwin , Sydney

Roszak , T (1971) <u>The Making of the Counterculture</u> Faber , London

Rousseau , (1754) <u>A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality</u> -see trans. F. Phillip (1994)

Oxford University Press , Oxford

Rowe , D (1995) <u>Popular Cultures : Rock Music , Sport and the Politics of Pleasure</u>

Sage , London

Sarup , M (1988) <u>An Introductory Guide to Post-Structuralism and Postmodernism</u>

Harvester Wheatsheaf , Hertfordshire

Schwartz , L (1990) "Hippies of the 90s" <u>The Age</u> 18/2

Sercombe , H (1993) "Youth Theory : Marx or Foucault ? " in White , R (ed) " <u>Youth Subcultures : Theory , History and the Australian Experience</u> , National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies , Hobart

Sherington , G (1990) <u>Australia's Immigrants</u> Allen and Unwin , Sydney

Sherwood , P (1996) "The Didjeridu and Alternative Lifestylers' Reconstruction of Social Reality " in Neuenfeldt , K (ed)(1996) <u>The Didjeridu : From Arnhem Land to Internet</u> Perfect Beat Publications , Sydney

Shils , E (1955) "The end of ideology ? " <u>Encounter</u>

Shuker , R (1994) <u>Understanding Popular Music</u> Routledge , London

Smart , B (1986) " The politics of truth and the problems of hegemony " in D. Hoy (ed) <u>Foucault - A Critical Reader</u> Blackwell , Oxford

Steggels , S (1992) "Nothing ventured , nothing gained : Midnight Oil and the politics of rock " in Hayward , P (ed) <u>From Pop to Punk to Postmodernism : Popular music and Australian culture from the 1960s to the 1990s</u> Allen and Unwin , Sydney

Stilwell , F (1993) <u>Economic Inequality - Who gets what in Australia</u> Pluto Press , Sydney

St John , (ed) (1985) <u>The Big Australian Rock Book</u> Megabooks , Sydney

Stratton , J (1992) <u>The Young Ones : Working-Class Culture , Consumption and the Category of Youth</u> Black Swan Press , Perth

Tait , G (1993) " Reassessing street kids : A critique of subculture theory " in White , R (ed) <u>Youth Subcultures : Theory , History and the Australian Experience</u> National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies , Hobart

Thompson , H (1966) <u>Hell's Angels</u> Random House , New York

Thorne , T (1993) <u>Dictionary of Popular Culture : Fads , Fashions and Cults</u> Bloomsbury , London

Thornton , S (1995) <u>Club Cultures : Music , Media and Subcultural Capital</u> Polity Press , Cambridge

Touraine , A (1984) <u>Le Retour de l'acteur : Essai de Sociologie</u>   Fayard , Paris

Turner , G (1992) "Australian popular music and its contexts " in Hayward , P (ed) <u>From Pop to Punk to Postmodernism : Popular music and Australian culture from the 1960s to the 1990s</u> Allen and Unwin , Sydney

Turner , S (1995) <u>hungry for heaven : Rock and Roll and the search for redemption</u> Hodder and Stoughton , London

Varma , D (1966) <u>The Gothic Flame</u> Russell and Russell , New York

Walker , C (1996) <u>Stranded : The Secret History of Australian Independent Music 1977- 1991</u> Macmillan , Sydney

Walker , J - (1985) " Rebels with our applause ? A critique of resistance theory in Willis' ethnography of schooling " <u>The Journal of Schooling</u> no 2 , p167

- (1986) "Romanticising resistance , romanticising culture : A critique of Willis' theory of cultural production " <u>The British Journal of Sociology</u> no 1 , p1

Walser , R (1993) <u>Running With The Devil : Power , Gender , and Madness in Heavy Metal Music</u> Wesleyan University Press , Hanover

Wark , M (1988) "Homage to Catatonia" <u>Meanjin</u> No.2

Waters , C (1981) " Badges of half-formed inarticulate radicalism : a critique of recent trends in the study of working class culture " International Labour and Working Class History 19 (Spring) , pp 23-37

Weinstein , D (1991) Heavy Metal : A Cultural Sociology Maxwell-Macmillan , Oxford

White , P (1980) Sydney Libertarianism : a history and critique B.A (hons) thesis , Department of Government , Sydney University

White , R (1981) Inventing Australia : Images and Identity 1788 - 1980 Allen and Unwin , Sydney

White , R (1993) "Youth Studies : Debate and Diversity " in White , R (ed) Youth Subcultures : Theory , History and the Australian Experience National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies , Hobart

Whitfield , K and Ross , R (1996) The Australian Labour Market Harper Educational , Pymble

Whittaker , M (1996) "Just don't call us Ferals" The Australian Magazine 17/2

Willis , P - (1976) "The Cultural Meaning of Drug Use " in Resistance Through Rituals
(eds) S.Hall and T.Jefferson , Unwin Hyman , London

- (1978) Profane Culture Routledge & Kegan Paul , London

- (1990) Common Culture Open University Press , Milton Keynes

Willis , S (1993) "Hardcore : Subculture American Style " Critical Inquiry n.19 (Winter)

Woods (1977) Youth , Generations and Social Class Open University Press , Milton Keynes

Yinger , J (1982) <u>Countercultures : The Promise and the Peril of a World Turned Upside Down</u> The Free Press , New York