Psychedelics and the Advertising Man: The 1960s "Countercultural Creative" on Madison Avenue

by Cynthia B. Meyers

> I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness,
> starving hysterical naked . . .
> who were burned alive in their innocent flannel suits on Madison Avenue amid blasts of leaden verse & the tanked-up clatter of the iron regiments of fashion & the nitroglycerine shrieks of the fairies of advertising & the mustard gas of sinister intelligent editors, or were run down by the drunken taxicabs of Absolute Reality. . . .
>
> —Allen Ginsberg, "Howl"[1]

In the mid to late 1960s, a new figure appeared on Madison Avenue: the countercultural advertising man. Usually employed in the copywriting and art departments of advertising agencies,[2] these countercultural "creatives" affected the mannerisms and dress of the youth culture as they served their agencies' corporate clients. Their hip appearance helped convince certain clients that the advertising agency was tapping into the cultural zeitgeist. Likewise, some ad men[3] hoped that participating in countercultural practices, such as smoking marijuana and taking LSD, would expand their abilities to produce the so-called creative and concept-driven advertising that was thought to appeal to the youth market. The phenomenon of acid-dropping ad men, I will argue, is not an aberration in the history of corporate culture or the counterculture, but the consequence of specific beliefs, ideas, and social conditions.

First, the psychedelic movement as popularized by Timothy Leary was rooted in many of the same assumptions about human nature and the mind held by many advertisers. These assumptions reflect what I will call a technocratic approach to culture and society. Second, most countercultural creatives were young, white, and middle-class, having the same background and cultural referents as the countercultural youth. Furthermore, as members of the professional classes, these ad men suffered many of the same anxieties and doubts over the meaning of middle-class values that may have contributed to concurrent and widespread middle-class abuse of drugs such as barbiturates, amphetamines, and alcohol. Third, under pressure to produce innovative advertising that would appeal to already saturated consumer markets, advertising creatives sought new methods for stimulating their own creativity. In progressive advertising agencies,

copywriters and designers began to use techniques such as encounter group sessions to stimulate their own thinking about consumer products. For some of these advertising creatives, the psychedelics LSD and marijuana also offered stimulation for creative thinking. By taking on counterculture practices and dress and by valorizing countercultural tenets such as freedom, self-expression, and honesty, these countercultural ad men facilitated the counterculture's eventual subsumption into an updated culture of consumption.

Technocracy and the Counterculture

The postwar decades marked the ascendancy and dominance of "technocracy" and "social engineering." As Theodore Roszak argues, a technocracy is a society "in which those who govern justify themselves by appeal to technical experts who, in turn, justify themselves by appeal to scientific forms of knowledge."[4] A technocracy operates by increasing efficiency, instituting rationalization, and devising technological solutions to social problems. An underlying assumption was the belief that once universal laws of human behavior were identified, it would be possible to predict and manipulate social phenomena. Thus, advertisers, with high hopes, have expended huge resources on the development of various psychological techniques, such as "motivation research," in the name of market research but with the aim of predicting and controlling consumer buying behavior.[5]

According to Terence Ball, the race during the cold war to achieve technological superiority over the Soviet bloc set the stage for the ascendence of a positivist and instrumentalist social science.[6] As one social scientist described it, the "social urgency" of winning the cold war meant that many psychologists were "unabashedly pragmatic" in their research into human behavior. Researchers thus made efforts to measure so-called personality traits such as intelligence or creativity in order to marshal the human resources needed to gain on the Soviets.[7] However, the contradictions of the technocratic order were evident to some in the development and use of atomic weapons; the political rationalization for the use of an excessively murderous force deeply undermined visions of the progressive potentials of new technologies.

Thus, discontent with postwar consumerism, suburbanization, and technocracy was manifest in various forms throughout the 1950s and early 1960s before the eruption of countercultural change in the mid 1960s. For example, the 1950s civil rights movement expressed and acted on the political and economic disenfranchisement of black Americans. The abundance and freedom promised by consumer culture did not extend to them, which created an unbearable "fissure between appearance and reality."[8] Deeply ensconced in the American dream, suburban middle-class "housewives" wondered why housework took so much more time despite owning gadgets and appliances labeled "labor saving." As Betty Friedan would later argue, they were trapped in the "squirrel cage" of a "modern plate-glass-and-broadloom ranch house."[9] Meanwhile, the Beats expressed their unwillingness to "work, produce, consume, work, produce, con-

sume" by dropping out, cultivating alienation.[10] Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* provided a metaphor, according to the historian J. Meredith Neil, that "expos[ed] the pointlessness of American enchantment with a kind of progress that involves constant, compulsive movement."[11]

In the early and mid 1960s, involvement in the civil rights movement and antiwar solidarity with the Vietnamese fighting American hegemony led some affluent white youth to discover their own oppression in the exploitative and distorted values of American consumer culture.[12] Youth rejected, in Abbie Hoffman's words,

> a system that channeled human beings like so many laboratory rats with electrodes rammed up their asses into a highly mechanized maze of class rankings, degrees, careers, neon supermarkets, military-industrial complexes, suburbs, repressed sexuality, hypocrisy, ulcers and psychoanalysts.[13]

Youth set out to create a whole new culture—a "Woodstock Nation"—that would redefine freedom and resist the "mechanized maze" of repression. As Stuart Ewen writes, "Youth saw itself as a beacon of a higher morality" against the hypocrisies and failures of technocratic consumerism, and "sought to unravel, and then reweave the fabric of daily life itself." The development of alternative musics, clothing styles, communities, and drugs provided the means not only for the Woodstock Nation to define itself as a cultural community but also, according to Ewen, "to reshape meaning itself."[14]

To reshape meaning required a kind of creativity that was not measurable or even controllable. Allen Ginsberg's improvised and unedited poetry reflected a desire to represent the unmediated impulse. His poetry spoke of truth derived from experience rather than from the quantifying of information. Ginsberg's poetry was not a call to make art-for-art's-sake—that was the bourgeois response to the alienation of modern life. It was a call for self-discovery, a call to overthrow the "manipulated consciousness" formed by social institutions like the schools and the mass media. Thus, in order to tap unexplored wells of creativity, members of the counterculture rejected any limitations on experimentation: "people were encouraged to try everything."[15] Alternative psychologies and orientalisms, such as Gestalt, Maslow's self-actualization, Alan Watts' Zen Buddhism, and Richard Alpert's Indian mysticism turned many adherents away from the outer world of politics and in toward the personal journeys of expanding the inner world of consciousness. And Timothy Leary, chief architect and "carnival barker"[16] of the psychedelic movement, promoted LSD as a shortcut to mystical consciousness and endless creativity.

Psychedelics, the Technocrats, and Middle-Class Drug Use

Leary's hard sell of psychedelics may have distressed some of the early believers in psychedelia as religious experience,[17] yet Leary's background in clin-

ical psychology informed his interest in positioning LSD as a problem solver with mass applications. In 1973, Leary recalled his initial goal in his career as a psychologist:

> I was convinced that drastic limitations of human intellectual and emotional function were caused by inflexible states of mind, static and conditioned neural circuits which created and preserved malfunctional states of perceived reality. In the then-Zeitgeist of Salk, Fleming, Pauling, I believed that the right chemical used correctly was the cure. The "ailment" I had selected as curable was human nature.[18]

Thus, Leary would come to view LSD as a potential "chemical key"[19] for opening the mind—a metaphor that echoes the mechanistic view of the brain held by many of Leary's fellow human scientists. Dr. Sidney Cohen, an enthusiastic LSD researcher, declared that the human brain is "an underpowered (20 watts ...) self-scrutinizing symbol factory." Not only is it a factory generating less wattage than a light bulb, Cohen also believed the brain to be a territory yet to be conquered: "The brain is an almost unspoiled wilderness; its exploration and charting have just begun."[20] Like many LSD researchers at the time, Cohen assumed that the brain held underutilized resources that could be applied to solving technical and social problems. Thus, much of the early research on LSD and other psychedelics was directed at uncovering its usefulness for expanding the brain-machine's capacity and efficiency. One study administered LSD to "professional males" who were then asked to solve "creativity tests." The subjects' self-rating of their efforts indicated their belief in LSD's efficacy as a facilitator of problem solving.[21] A popular press book published in 1967 reiterated many of these psychologists' assumptions when it trumpeted LSD as having helped a designer understand Einstein's theory of relativity and having improved another's IQ scores—both clear signifiers of mental achievement.[22]

In his social history of LSD, Jay Stevens traces the rise of psychology, its behaviorist branches, and its impulse to instrumentally quantify the as yet unquantifiable elements of personality, intelligence, and sanity.[23] As a member of the social engineering elite, Leary's expertise in constructing personality measuring tests had aided his efforts to categorize and define typologies of creative people.[24] Consequently, in their 1964 manual on how to take an LSD trip, co-authors Richard Alpert, Ralph Metzner, and Leary posited that certain personality traits were more conducive to producing transcendent experiences than others. Prerequistes for good LSD trips included having such personality traits as "flexibility," "warmth," and "creativity" but not "coldness" and "cynicism."[25] Although their esteem for "flexibility" might appear to be oppositional to the technocratic worldview, Alpert, Metzner, and Leary's recommendation was embedded in a technocratic assumption that the personality is something made up of measurable traits. These researchers replaced the inherent subjectivity of character analysis with the certainty of their scientific objectivity. Furthermore, they disregarded the relational meanings of such character definitions; for example, they did not

specify whether having a "flexible" personality means being a person who has the ability to change her entire worldview or just her dinner plans.

As LSD usage began to diffuse outside the small scientific community that had been experimenting with it, Leary and his cohorts continued to maintain that standards should be maintained to determine who was qualified to experience LSD. When Ken Kesey began his Kool-Aid acid tests in 1965, he disregarded entirely Leary's concern that LSD be ingested in the proper set and setting. However, Leary's role as a technical expert who instructed the masses on the best uses of LSD evolved from a technocratic notion of beneficent social engineering. Thus, in Theodore Roszak's critique of Leary and the psychedelic movement, which Roszak viewed as just another tool for maintaining social control through emotional release, he notes that the psychedelic slogan "Better Living Through Chemistry" was not at all satirical.

> The [hippie sloganeers] mean it the way Du Pont means it. The gadget-happy American has always been a figure of fun because of his facile assumption that there exists a technological solution to every human problem. It only took the great psychedelic crusade to perfect the absurdity by proclaiming that personal salvation and the social revolution can be packed in a capsule.[26]

Leary's message to pop a pill for a higher consciousness may have touched a resonant chord among many in the affluent middle classes. The popular press in 1966 and 1967 published a number of articles pointing out the widespread use and abuse of depressants and stimulants and linking the prevalence of pillpopping to the explosion of psychedelic use. *Look* magazine asked why affluent and educated Americans "hide behind a chemical curtain." *Newsweek* noted that 24 million prescriptions for amphetamines and 123 million for sedatives were written in 1965 alone. And *The Atlantic Monthly* went undercover to a "white-collar pill party" and noted that drugs, "like chewing gum, TV, oversize cars, and crime, are part of the American way of life."[27] Despite education, affluence, and upward mobility, too many Americans plastered over their unease with substance abuse.

The diffusion of marijuana use among the middle class was also noted in the popular press. In a 1967 photographic spread, Life magazine showed a "Ph.D. in humanities and an expectant mother spend[ing] a quiet afternoon smoking marijuana," just two of the "millions of turned-on users."[28] Hunter S. Thompson claimed in 1967 that the drug use in the Haight-Ashbury ("Hashbury") was only the "orgiastic tip of a great psychedelic iceberg that is already drifting in the sea lanes of the Great Society."[29] Consequently, although marijuana use initially diffused among the white middle classes as a marker of a "new bohemianism" that celebrated authenticity, originality, and spontaneity in the spirit of Whitman and Emerson,[30] by 1970 the *New York Times Magazine* could point out that "the pot-smoking art student of 1965 is the pot-smoking art director of 1970."[31]

The 1960s "Creative Revolution" in Advertising and the "Countercultural Creative"

The arrival of pot-smoking art directors on Madison Avenue took place within the larger context of increasing middle-class use of psychedelics[32] and as an outcome of advertising's so-called Creative Revolution. Led by the New York advertising agency, Doyle Dane Bernbach (DDB), the Creative Revolution of the early 1960s took place when it did to rejuvenate—literally—the institution of advertising when it had exhausted many of its strategies. Consumer disappointment with planned obsolescence and exaggerated product claims required that advertisers work to establish a new kind of relationship between consumer and product. Seeking to reform the hyperbole and hard sell of 1950s advertising, DDB's advertising campaigns were notable for their understated, humorous, concept-driven qualities. DDB's slogan for Volkswagen, "Think Small," and for the Avis rental car company, "We're number 2, we try harder," typified the new advertising strategies emerging in the 1960s. The slogans' modesty and absence of hyperbole signified sincerity and honesty to an audience unresponsive to hard sell advertising.

The Creative Revolution also resulted in a gain of prestige and status for copywriters and art directors, otherwise known as creatives, within the ad industry because this new strategy privileged the creative advertising concept over market research or product information. In contrast to those who sought social scientific and quantifiable means for designing effective advertising, the Creative Revolution focused the trade on the value of <u>creativity</u> as the advertising industry's most important and effective product. The advertising trade press called DDB's advertising an "artistic innovation" on par with "pop art or the frug," and the creatives at DDB were hailed as "culturally significant" as writers like Mickey Spillane or Ernest Hemingway and artists like Paul Klee or Andy Warhol.[33] Increasing numbers of advertising trade awards (e.g., Clios, Addies) rewarded those advertising makers who had designed clever high concept advertising over those using the tried and true techniques of the hard sell. The elevation of certain copywriters and art directors into creative stars helped mitigate some of the pervasive insecurity existing in most advertising agencies, the result of regular client turnover.[34] However, if creativity was the advertising industry's new valued product, the question remained as to how it could be produced regularly.

DDB's success spawned a new breed of agencies, many founded by former DDB creatives. The services they offered did not usually include market research or even media buying in some cases, but what they did sell was their creativity. The advertising "establishment" expressed some disdain for the new "boutique" agencies; agency head David Ogilvy called the new breed of creatives "pseudo-intellectuals" unconcerned with salesmanship.[35] Copywriter Jerry Della Femina, one of the new breed, claimed that the changes in the ad industry paralleled student revolts in the universities: "In advertising, just like the schools, there is a group of people who are threatening an establishment and the establishment is fighting the threat."[36] Art director George Lois described the growth of boutique

agencies as "a small new world within our industry . . . totaling perhaps a hundred creative nonconformists with common roots and a separate language from the oily mainstream of American advertising."[37] These agencies' production of advertising they considered to be honest, clever, and relevant allowed them to position themselves as the Woodstock Nation of the advertising industry.

Nineteen-sixty-seven was the year of the youth market. As the illusion that a new global consciousness would overpower technocratic consumerism faded, "good vibes" gave way to "capitalist exploitation."[38] The problem, according to historian T.J. Jackson Lears, was that although counterculture effectively criticized technocracy and materialism, it "stressed the centrality of consumption" and was "fixated on matters of taste."[39] If the badges of citizenship in the Woodstock Nation could be gained merely by buying blue jeans and rock music albums, then the commodification of the counterculture's material culture by marketers was inevitable. By 1969, a J. C. Penney executive knew the score.

> Honesty is in. Cheap is in. Kids are moving toward a "tell it like it is" philosophy. I think we can hit them right in the eyes with a "sell it like it is" approach.[40]

Abbie Hoffman's hope that "the Pig is too dumb to dig the scene" was not unfounded, as advertising chiefs like Fairfax Cone initially dismissed the significance of the "youth market" as exaggerated and as having less buying power than all those "family heads over 25."[41]

The countercultural creatives understood that communicating with the youth market was not as simple as adopting the language. "The important thing when you talk to the young is you have to act groovy in your ads, not just say you're groovy," advised one creative in 1969.[42] Even "acting groovy" is not the same as being groovy, but the countercultural creatives were focused on the styles rather than the meanings of countercultural expression.[43] The most obvious manifestation was the adoption of new dress styles by creatives throughout the industry. "You should see the things walking around back in our creative department," complained one agency head, "Frazzled hair, denims, neckerchiefs, the works." An observer described his ad executive neighbor: "He . . . used to be strictly a gray-flannel, button-down, crew-cut type. But now he wears flowered jackets, broad ties and sideburns down to here."[44] A 1967 *Printers' Ink* article was headlined "Agency swingers flourish their mini-skirts."[45] The new style signified youth, being "with it" and culturally connected to "where it's happening."

The adoption of alternative business attire by creatives and others in the ad industry was consistent with the developing interest in alternative "life styles." A trade press article about "swinging" bachelor ad men was a sign that having the perfect wife would no longer be a necessity for corporate advancement. The article included a helpful list of do's and don't's for would-be swingers entitled "How to swing and stay loose."[46] Creatives were especially apt to cultivate the look and behavior of difference. Explaining that "eccentrics are drawn to the business and welcomed into it," Della Femina noted that agency executives tried to show off

their weird creatives to clients as a sign that their agency provided superior creative services: "It's like an arms race. . . . Our nuts are nuttier than anyone else's. We have more madmen per square inch than any other agency. Therefore we are creative."[47]

Dressing the part did not guarantee an ad man success as a creative. Therefore, many creatives turned to therapeutic techniques and to drugs to generate their ideas for selling. In 1969 the Smith/Greenland agency experimented with encounter group approaches inspired by the Esalen Institute in California, where many of the new humanistic psychologies and therapies were being developed. The creatives would hug, hold hands, and nuzzle in a nonsexual manner to stimulate their creativity—"freeing their spirits to make good ads." They explained that their "touch-touch bang-bang" technique eliminated "emotional barriers" and brought them "in tune with each other." This allowed more personal involvement and inspired more "personal" advertising that "touches other people.[48] This approach promised to address the problem posed by viewer cynicism toward the depersonalized salesmanship of countless irritating ad messages in the mass media. It promised to address this problem by personalizing the impersonal.

Smith/Greenland was not the first business to use encounter group techniques, nor the last. Corporate managers in many industries continue to sample and assimilate the instrumental elements of humanistic psychological therapies. Having rejected Freud and the painstaking analysis of neurosis, humanistic psychologies were concerned with helping the "healthy" person to "self-actualize" by stripping off layers of repression.[49] This tactic had in common with the quantified psychologies of the 1950s the assumption that there was a true self under the layers of personality that should be exposed. Identifying and stimulating those subconscious desires that may motivate behavior has been an important project of advertisers. The humanistic version of psychology provided an added patina of healthfulness and the goal of self-actualization to the stimulation of consumption. For those making the stimulating advertising, therapies that stripped down "emotional barriers" soon became a useful tool in the creative commercial work place.

Countercultural Creatives and Psychedelics

The stereotypical man-in-the-gray-flannel-suit downed three martinis at lunch to numb himself. In contrast, many countercultural creatives sought heightened awareness. LSD and marijuana use seemed to provide relief from repression, to stimulate heightened awareness and increased sensitivity, and to facilitate feelings of communion with others. Using LSD was a powerful way to feel connected to others: drug researcher Norman Zinberg notes that one of LSD's consistent effects was the sense of a "powerful bonding among people who tripped together."[50] Marijuana had a similar potential effect. Recalls former student activist Michael Rossman:

> When a young person took his first puff of psychoactive smoke, he also drew in the psychoactive culture as a whole, the entire matrix of law and association surrounding the drug. . . . One inhaled a certain way of dressing, talking, acting, certain attitudes.[51]

Using these drugs was, as Zinberg maintains, a way to espouse "in an ideological sense the fighting of repression."[52] As Allen Ginsberg asserted in 1971, LSD "was necessary and inevitable in a highly rigid and brainwashed civilization such as ours to help us find what was always there."[53] To emphasize psychedelics' repression-fighting capabilities, Leary went as far as to claim in a 1966 interview in *Playboy* magazine that LSD enhanced sex so well that women could experience "several hundred orgasms" on LSD.[54]

However exaggerated Leary's claims may have been, the countercultural creatives who used psychedelics often did find their ways of seeing altered and their aesthetic values affected. Some may have read Robert Masters and Jean Houston's 1968 book, *Psychedelic Art*, and believed the claims that the psychedelic experience includes the basic components of the creative and artistic process, such as fantasy, relaxation, intensity of concentration, and sensory awareness.[55] A former DDB art director, Victor Zurbel, contends that LSD made him feel more creative, more attuned to possibilities, and that advertising work then evolved out of that.

> It wasn't just experimenting, it was really expansion. It was heightened awareness . . . work might not be more creative . . . but it would stimulate the senses, you'd have a keener ear for music, a keener eye for visuals.[56]

An anonymous pot-smoking "ad-man head" asserted in a 1968 interview in the ad trade press that his marijuana usage qualified him to "talk to the youth market."[57] After staying straight to get information on the account from account executives, this "ad-man head" would use marijuana to "explore all the avenues" because "grass makes for much freer association. You get 20 ideas instead of two in the same time." Although he maintained that using marijuana "is not a cure-all for a mediocre creative mind," the "ad-man head" declared that it should favorably affect his production of advertising ideas; his ads should be better and more innovative than those of "some guy who goes home to the suburbs and watches TV."[58]

The psychedelic sensibility can be seen in some advertising visual and conceptual strategies. The swirling colors of psychedelic art did appear in some advertisements, such as a 1969 Revlon ad with a nude woman bathed in psychedelic colors. Yet the influence of LSD and marijuana is also discernible in certain humorous and high-concept driven advertisements. One public service ad for public libraries consisted of the alphabet centered on the white page. The copy read, in part, "It's astonishing what those twenty-six little marks can do. In Shakespeare's hands they became *Hamlet*."[59] The idea that the sum of the alphabet is infinitely greater than its parts resonates as a possible psychedelic insight.

Likewise, the entire pop art aesthetic, which drew heavily on commercial design and advertising, could be seen as linked to the psychedelic sensibility. As one middle-class marijuana user reported in 1969, "There is probably no better way to understand Andy Warhol's pop art Campbell's Soup cans than to get stoned and look at everyday objects."[60] Thus, seen while high, advertising and pop icons embodied both the absurdity and the essence of consumer culture. So it follows that Andy Warhol, former commercial artist and the "high priest of camp" brought his Factory retinue into a television studio in 1968 to apply his "put-on psychedelia" to a television commercial in 1968.[61]

By 1970, many in the ad industry believed that marijuana would eventually be legalized. Unlike the recently banned LSD, which was tainted by the false claim that it caused chromosomal damage, marijuana's acceptance among the affluent middle class market seemed assured. In 1968, an article in the advertising trade press discussed the problem of marketing legalized marijuana. Perhaps, conjectured the author, counterculture heroes Allen Ginsberg and Alan Watts would be interested in "turning pro" to make ads promoting pot.[62] Likewise, in 1970 copywriter Jerry Della Femina predicted that whoever was elected president in 1992 would, by virtue of demographics, be an "ex-pothead" and would definitely call for legalization.[63] Although Ginsberg did not become a spokesman for commercially produced marijuana, and President Clinton insisted he never inhaled, these ad men were clearly trying to stay ahead of the curve in case a good advertising opportunity arose.

Despite the initial enthusiasm, there were drawbacks to using psychedelics for generating ideas. As former art director Zurbel recounts, "You know, you'd smoke something, have an incredibly brilliant idea and the next day you'd wake up and look at it and say, did I think that was great yesterday?" Unfortunately for the countercultural creatives, mind-expanding substances tended to make the ordinary seem extraordinary. The use of psychedelics increased the risk that the advertising would not appear interesting or innovative to an audience that was not high or tripping. It was therefore difficult to keep the sense of what would interest or attract audiences who had not been initiated into the psychedelic sensibility.

Eventually, the capability of psychedelics to sustain the expansion of consciousness was questioned. As Viva, one of Warhol's "superstars," admitted about taking LSD, "I thought it was a big joke because you think you've got the KEY to the whole universe only you can't remember exactly what it is."[64] By the end of the 1960s, using psychedelics was less a sign of countercultural politics and more often a sign of living the good life. As Lee and Shlain note, marijuana and LSD often functioned as "pleasure props" rather than chemical keys to the exploration of the inner world.[65] Furthermore, like alcohol and prescription drugs, psychedelics served as an escape from pressures and uncertainties of the workplace. As one anonymous ad man claimed as early as 1968,

> I would say most heads are so apathetic about the agency business and stuff that when they take an acid trip it's to think about better things

than selling soap and cigarettes.[66]

Consequently, by 1970, when the ad industry underwent a sharp recession and the trade press announced that "agency creative stars are fading away,"[67] the mystique of the countercultural creative lost some of its power. However, the legacy of the Creative Revolution and the countercultural creative is seen today in the advertising creative who cuts a fashionable and arty figure amidst the "suits." Although drug experimentation may no longer be *de rigueur* for creatives, youth and staying on the cutting edge continue to be. As countercultural creative agencies of the 1960s became the established agencies of the 1970s and 1980s, many young creatives' attitudes toward their work changed. As Edward Buxton describes the maturing of an advertising creative, at first "the very application of creative talents to the process of selling a can of peas or a plastic toy seems immoral." But eventually those attitudes soften, and "the seasoned professional comes to believe in the importance and significance of his work to the 'Real World.' But more than that, he finds satisfaction in doing his job well."[68]

In conclusion, the phenomenon of acid-tripping and pot-smoking ad men can be explained partly by certain cultural and social conditions. The psychedelic movement, as popularized by Leary, shared technocratic roots with the advertising industry. The search for a key to unlock the mind remains the holy grail of any consciousness industry, including advertising. The diffusion of psychedelic use through the white middle class affected ad men as well. The insecurities, vagaries, and dissatisfactions of commercial work probably contributed to ad men's efforts to make their work more meaningful and to attempt to transcend the purely instrumental nature of their work. Last, but most important, changing market conditions of the 1960s, which included newly segmented markets, consumer dissatisfaction and oversaturation, and the surging youth culture, put pressure on the advertising industry to produce new selling strategies. Thus, the Creative Revolution placed increased importance on advertising "creativity." Seeking new methods and techniques for generating creative advertising, some creatives experimented with psychedelics. The adoption of countercultural style helped legitimize some ad men's claims to be able to communicate to the youth market.

Despite the youth culture's initial embrace of psychedelics as signifiers of a true counterculture, the relative ease with which psychedelic culture was commodified and commercialized indicates that its essence was never truly at odds with consumer culture. "Turning on" required little more than consuming a commodity substance. The pleasures of psychedelics were inflated in the quest to instrumentally expand the brain's capability. In the great tradition of American commercialism, the product (LSD) was sold as part of a life style: "Don't just sell them a new can opener; sell them a new way of life."[69] The countercultural creatives exemplified the contradictions of psychedelic culture in their efforts to sell and be sold on a new style of life. In their search for a new autheniticity, many found instead only the freedom to consume.

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Notes

1. Allen Ginsberg, *Howl and Other Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights Pocket Bookshop, 1956).
2. Advertising workers include media buyers, who purchase and place advertising time and space in the media; account executives, who attract and retain the agencies' clients; and the "creatives," who conceptualize, write, and design the advertisements.
3. I use the trade term "ad men" purposively. Although some women, such as Mary Wells and Paula Green, were prominent advertising copywriters in the 1960s, the industry was predominantly male. As insiders' jargon within the advertising trade, "ad men" evokes the fraternalism of an industry that defined itself as masculine in contradistinction to the putatively passive, feminized, consuming masses.
4. Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969), p. 8.
5. Stephen Fox, *The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and Its Creators* (New York: Vintage, 1985), pp. 184-187.
6. Terence Ball, "The Politics of Social Science in Postwar America," in Lary May, ed., *Recasting America* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 78, 88.
7. Larry Briskman, "Creative Product and Creative Process in Science and Art," p. 134, and I. C. Jarvie, "The Rationality of Creativity," p. 111, in D. Dutton and M. Krausz, eds., *The Concept of Creativity in Science and Art* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981).
8. Stuart Ewen, "Youth Culture," in J. Becker, G. Hedebro, L. Paldan, eds., *Communication and Domination* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1986), p. 89.
9. Interviewee in Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (NY: Dell Publishing, 1963, 1983) p. 28.
10. Jack Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums* (New York: Signet Books, 1958), p. 78.
11. J. Meredith Neil, "1955: The Beginning of Our Own Times," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 73 (Autumn 1974), p. 437.
12. David Horowitz, Michael Lerner, and Craig Pyes, eds., *Counterculture and Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1972).
13. Abbie Hoffman, *Woodstock Nation* (New York: Vintage, 1969), p. 15.
14. Ewen, "Youth Culture," p. 91.
15. Horowitz, Lerner, Pyes, *Counterculture and Revolution*, pp. xi, xii.
16. Martin A. Lee and Bruce Shlain, *Acid Dreams* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1985), p. 114.
17. See Art Kleps, who founded his own psychedelic religion, complaining that Leary sold the psychedelic movement more like "beer, not champagne." *Millbrook: The True Story of the Early Years of the Psychedelic Revolution* (Oakland, CA: Bench Press, 1975), p. 25.
18. Timothy Leary, "The Seeds of the Sixties" (1973), in *Changing My Mind, Among Others* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1982), p. 172.
19. Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner, and Richard Alpert, *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead* (New Hyde Park, NY: University Books, 1964), p. 11.
20. Sidney Cohen, *The Beyond Within: The LSD Story* (New York: Atheneum, 1964), p.

xiii.

21. W.W. Harman, et al., "Psychedelic Agents in Creative Problem Solving," *Psychological Reports* 19 (Aug. 1966): 211-77.

22. P. G. Stafford, and B. H. Golightly, *LSD: The Problem-Solving Psychedelic* (New York: Award Books, 1967), p. 58.

23. Jay Stevens, *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987).

24. Leary, "Creative Performance and the Creative Experience" (1962), in *Changing My Mind, Among Others*, pp. 54-60.

25. Leary, Metzner, Alpert, *The Psychedelic Experience*, p. 103.

26. Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture*, p. 177.

27. Roland Berg, "Why American Hide Behind a Chemical Curtain," *Look*, Aug. 8, 1967, pp. 12-13; "LSD and the Drugs of the Mind," *Newsweek*, May 9, 1966, pp. 59-64; Bruce Jackson, "White-Collar Pill Party," *The Atlantic Monthly*, August 1966, pp. 35-40.

28. A. Rosenfeld, "Marijuana: Millions of Turned-on Users," *Life*, July 7, 1967, pp. 16-23.

29. Hunter S. Thompson, "The Hashbury Is the Capital of the Hippies," *New York Times Magazine*, May 14, 1967, pp. 29+.

30. James T. Carey, "Marijuana Use Among the New Bohemians," in David E. Smith, ed., *The New Social Drug: Cultural, Medical, and Legal Perspectives on Marijuana* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 95.

31. Sam Blum, "Marijuana Clouds the Generation Gap," *New York Times Magazine*, Aug. 23, 1970, pp. 28+.

32. Following David E. Smith and the *Journal of Psychedelic Drugs*, I will use the term "psychedelics" to also include marijuana in order to emphasize their shared cultural context.

33. Stephen Baker, "The Cultural Significance of Doyle Dane Bernbach," *Advertising Age*, Nov. 1, 1965, p. 99.

34. Due to this pervasive insecurity, ad men's ethics can be rather instrumental. See Joseph Bensman's caustic inventory of ad men's ethics in *Dollars and Sense: Ideology, Ethics, and the Meaning of Work in Profit and Nonprofit Organizations* (New York: Macmillan, 1967).

35. *Newsweek*, Aug. 18, 1969, p. 64. On the other hand, Marion Harper at McCann-Erickson went with the trend and set up a subsidiary "creative" agency, Jack Tinker.

36. Jerry Della Femina, *From Those Wonderful Folks Who Gave You Pearl Harbor: Frontline Dispatches from the Advertising War*, p. 148. However, Della Femina also compared the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) to the Hitler Youth for "trying to destroy business." Della Femina was clearly not sympathetic to the politics of the counterculture, only its style. "The Lost Generation," Marketing/Communications, June 1969, p. 32.

37. George Lois, with Bill Pitts, George, *Be Careful: A Greek Florist's Kid in the Roughhouse World of Advertising* (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1972), p. 226.

38. Horowitz, Lerner, Pyes, *Counterculture and Revolution*, p.xiii.

39. T. J. Jackson Lears, "A Matter of Taste: Corporate Cultural Hegemony in a Mass-Consumption Society," in May, *Recasting America*, p. 53.

40. *Fortune*, Jan. 1969. The ad campaign included the headline: "The NOW look, how to buy it."

41. Hoffman, *Woodstock Nation*, p. 97; Fairfax Cone, *The Blue Streak* (n.p.: Crain Communications, 1973), p. 187.

42. *Newsweek*, Aug. 18, 1969, p. 66.
43. See Stuart Ewen, *All Consuming Images* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), pp. 248-51.
44. *Newsweek*, Aug. 18, 1969, pp. 62-63.
45. "Agency Swingers Flourish Their Mini-Skirts," *Printers' Ink*, Aug. 11, 1967, pp. 12-13.
46. Yvonne Roscow, "The Sweet Sweet Life of Bachelor Ad Men," *Marketing/Communications*, Dec. 1967, pp. 28-36.
47. Della Femina, *From Those Wonderful Folks*, pp. 66, 233.
48. "The Touch-Touch Bang-Bang School of Creativity," *Marketing/Communications*, Feb. 1969, pp. 32-34.
49. For an interesting analysis of how the growth of humanistic psychology affected popular interest in subsequent new age and orientalist cults, see Frances FitzGerald, *Cities on a Hill* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), pp. 283-287.
50. Norman Zinberg, "Users Speak for Themselves," in L. Grinspoon and J. Bakalar, eds., *Psychedelic Reflections* (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1983), p. 51.
51. Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, p. 129.
52. Norman Zinberg, *Drug, Set, and Setting* (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1984), p. 102.
53. Bruce Cook, *The Beat Generation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 245.
54. Timothy Leary, "She Comes in Colors," *The Politics of Ecstasy* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 129.
55. Robert Masters and Jean Houston, *Psychedelic Art* (New York: Grove Press, 1968), p. 88.
56. Victor Zurbel, interview, April 1992, New York City.
57. "Chat with an Ad-Man Head," *Marketing/Communications*, Jan. 1968, p. 64.
58. "Chat with an Ad-Man Head," pp. 63-65.
59. Larry Dobrow, *When Advertising Tried Harder: The Sixties, the Golden Age of Advertising* (New York: Friendly Press, 1984), p. 31.
60. "Pop Drugs: The High as a Way of Life," *Time*, Sept. 26, 1969, p. 73.
61. "It's a Bird, It's a Plane, It's Andy Warhol and the Superstars," *Marketing/Communications*, Nov. 1968, p. 33.
62. "If Pot Is Legalized, Who Will Sell It?" *Marketing/Communications*, Oct. 1968, p. 52.
63. Jerry Della Femina, "How Ad Men Will Sell Grass," *Marketing/Communications*, Oct. 1970, p. 20.
64. Barbara L. Goldsmith, "La Dolce Viva," in T. Wolfe and E. W. Johnson, eds., *The New Journalism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 224.
65. Lee and Shlain, *Acid Dreams*, p. 255.
66. "Chat with an Ad-Man Head," p. 65.
67. Robin Nelson, "Agency Creative Stars Are Fading Away," *Marketing/Communications*, July 1970, pp. 42-46.
68. Edward Buxton, *Creative People at Work* (New York: Executive Communications, Inc., 1975), p. 124.
69. Roszak, *The Making of the Counter Culture*, p. 160.