

ject matter, together with its quasi-surrealist techniques of narrative and syntactic disjunction, this novel presented a striking new vision. This novel was followed by *The Soft Machine* and *The Ticket That Exploded* to form a trilogy. *Nova Express* (1964) makes extensive use of the "cut-up" techniques, which Burroughs had developed with his friend Brion Gysin.

A keen observer of contemporary reality in several countries, Burroughs has sought to present a kind of "world upside down" in order to sharpen the reader's consciousness. One of his major themes has been his anarchist-based protest against what he sees as increasingly repressive social control through such institutions as medicine and the police. Involved with drugs for some years, he managed to kick the habit, but there is no doubt that such experiences shaped his viewpoint. His works have been compared to pop art in painting and science fiction in literature. Sometimes taxed for misogyny, his world tends to be a masculine one, sometimes exploiting fantasies of regression to a hedonistic world of juvenile freedom. Burroughs's hedonism is acerbic and ironic, and his mixture of qualities yields a distorting mirror of reality which some have found, because perhaps of the many contradictions of later twentieth-century civilization itself, to be a compelling representation.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY.** Ann Charters, ed., *The Beats: Literary Bohemians in Postwar America*, Detroit: Gale Research, 1983 (Dictionary of Literary Biography, 16); Ted Morgan, *Literary Outlaw: The Life and Times of William Burroughs*, New York: Henry Holt, 1988; John Tytell, *Naked Angels: The Lives and Literature of the Beat Generation*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976.

Wayne R. Dynes

### BEATS AND HIPPIES

This social trend in mid-twentieth-century American life was constituted by groups of alienated youths and younger

adults, recognizable by their counterculture enthusiasms and defiance of then accepted norms of dress, deportment, and relation to the work ethic. Beat is the older term and it came into use to designate a self-marginalized social group of the late 1950s and early 60s that was influenced by existentialism and especially by the writers of the **Beat Generation**. The journalistic word "beatnik" is a pseudo-Slavic coinage of a type popular in the 1960s, the core element deriving from "beat" (generation), the suffix *-nik* being the formative of the noun of agent in Slavic languages. The term "hippie" was originally a slightly pejorative diminutive of the beat "hipster," which in turn seems to derive from 1940s jivetaik adjective "hep," meaning "with it, in step with current fashions." The original hippies were a younger group with more spending money and more flamboyant dress. Their music was rock instead of the jazz of the beats. Despite differences that seemed important at the time, beats and hippies are probably best regarded as successive phases of a single phenomenon.

Although the media, which incessantly sensationalized the beats and hippies, did a great deal to foster recruitment, the phenomenon has older roots, stemming not only from its immediate prefiguration in the small circle of beat writers and their friends, but also from the established Bohemian lifestyle of Western Europe and North America. **Bohemianism** is typically the product of the confluence of outcast groups in inner cities. Yet beats and hippies, as part of the whole **Counterculture** trend, had also a rural contingent, manifested in the establishment of farms run communally. Here a striking forerunner is the English utopian socialist Edward **Carpenter** (1844–1929), a bearded, sandal-wearing man who lived with his male lover and other associates working a market garden and practicing various arts and crafts. Significantly, Carpenter, who had been almost forgotten, was revived during this period by homosexuals attracted to

hippie ideals. These roots notwithstanding, there was much that was distinctively American about the phenomenon, and to the degree that it spread to Western Europe and Japan it was identifiable as part of the general wave of Americanized popular culture.

Attracted by the prestige of the beat writers, many beats/hippies cultivated claims to be poets and philosophers. In reality, once the tendency became modish only a few of the beat recruits were certifiably creative in literature and the arts; these individuals were surrounded by masses of people attracted by the atmosphere of revolt and experiment, or just seeking temporary separation—a moratorium as it was then called—from the banalities of ordinary American life. At its height the phenomenon supported scores of underground newspapers, which were read avidly by curious outsiders as well. As part of their general defiance of convention these papers published explicit personal advertisements, including those of homosexuals. Many journalists got their start in these now defunct publications, carrying with them into the mainstream media significant traces of the values they had upheld in their former careers.

Seekers after “cosmic consciousness,” beats and hippies became known for their efforts at mind expansion through the use of **drugs**, alcohol, and sex. Group smoking of marijuana (“grass,” “pot”) became universal, a kind of secular sacrament which served as a collective bond. Grass was not only a bond of pleasure but one of danger, since stiff criminal penalties imposed by often-overzealous lawmen, led to numerous busts. Part of the appeal of rural communes lay in their suitability as sites for growing the plant. The clandestine comradeship engendered by the ever-present custom of smoking grass—the legally proscribed marijuana—created an outcast’s tie with homosexuals, themselves subject to legal sanctions for their deviation. Significantly, the street term for the Other, “straight,” could refer either

to non-drug users or heterosexuals. In the 1960s psychedelic substances generated in the chemical laboratory, notably LSD, enjoyed considerable popularity. LSD trips were said to aid creativity, and a type of visual art, characterized by swirling lines and lurid colors and used mainly in underground newspapers and posters, was sometimes termed LSD art. Experimentation with drugs was also popular among the political radicals of the New Left, though they were inclined to criticize hippies for their apathy and lack of social conscience.

Mysticism exerted a potent influence among beats and hippies, and some steeped themselves in Asian religions, especially **Buddhism**, Taoism, and **Sufism**. This fascination was not new, inasmuch as ever since the foundation of Theosophy as an official movement in 1875, American and other western societies had been permeated by Eastern religious elements. Impelled by a search for wisdom and cheap living conditions, many hippies and beatniks set out for prolonged sojourns in **India**, **Nepal**, and **North Africa**. Stay-at-homes professed their deep respect for American Indian culture.

Ignoring the deeper aspects of these exotic trends, Middle America continued to fix its disapproving gaze on the more superficial aspects of the beat-hippie lifestyle. Abundant facial hair and a preference for casual, “funky” clothing set these deviants off from the squeaky-clean look of mainstream America, which professed its disgust at “dirty hippies.” Most hippies were heterosexual, but their long hair exposed them to jibes of **effeminacy**. In this way they could experience something of the rejection that had always been the lot of homosexuals.

The lure of unconventional behavior and experience exercised a siren call on American youth, which was chafing restlessly under the reign of the “up-tightness” of the Eisenhower years. Paradoxically, it was the new prosperity of postwar America that allowed young people to drop out and “do their own

thing" for a time, secure in the knowledge that—unlike members of racial minorities—they could safely rejoin the mainstream when the time came. For much smaller numbers of people, of course, historic Bohemias had offered similar attractions. Here, as in the decaying inner cities of America, a small core of creative individuals was surrounded by a large mass of outcasts and the urban poor. Even though their travels in beatdom might only be temporary, graduates of the experience developed a degree of lasting estrangement from, or at least scepticism toward, the conventional pieties of the American Establishment. Among the views that were now brought into question was the automatic pigeonholing of sexual minorities as "sick."

In a larger sense, beat attitudes, with their stress on feeling instead of reason, are a manifestation of the perennial appeal of the Romantic reaction against Classical norms. The vagabond ideal of traveling lightly, with few possessions, has affinities with hobo life, with the gypsies, and ultimately with the "wandering scholars" of the Middle Ages. With its adoption of a variant of jive talk, largely derived from black urban speech, the movement has left a lasting impression on the English vernacular, as seen in such expressions as "cool," "spaced out," and "rip off." As has been noted, the stress on experiment and social unconventionality created a natural affinity with homosexuality, which had been marginalized by Anglo-Saxon culture. Because of this perceived link—and the vogue of such seductive slogans of the **polymorphous perverse** as "If it feels good, do it" and "Copulate, don't populate"—it is likely that many apprentice beatniks permitted themselves to delve into aspects of sexual variation that would otherwise have remained a sealed book to them.

In the 1970s hostile critics, and some who had outgrown their earlier enthusiasm, proclaimed with relief the demise of the hippie movement. Its themes

of rejection of worldly goods and the more materialistic aspects of the American dream seemed to be reversed by the yuppie trend. Yet insofar as hippiedom was only the latest manifestation of a recurring strand in Western civilization, celebration of its obsequies is unwarranted.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Charles Perry, *The Haight-Ashbury: A History*, San Francisco: Rolling Stone Press, 1984; Marco Vassi, *The Stoned Apocalypse*, New York: Trident, 1972.

Wayne R. Dynes

### BEAUTY COMPETITIONS

As a rule the heterosexual norms of the modern world have affirmed a dichotomy of physical contests: women may compete on the basis of beauty and charm, while men match their brawn and muscle development. The reason for this separation seems to be a fear of the consequences that could ensue if men were publicly adulated as sex objects. Ordinary language, for example, permits women to be called "beautiful," while men must be styled "handsome." Recently these distinctions have broken down, but only partially.

*Ancient Greece.* Greek mythology shows a number of competitions among women, notably the Judgment of Paris, which was won by Aphrodite, the goddess of love. In the daily life of ancient Greece, however, competitions among males were more important. There were three categories of these. The first, the *kallisteia*, were connected with cults and the winner had to perform a ritual for a deity. While character and deportment were significant, these contests seem to have been decided on the basis of physical beauty. The *euanthia* focused on athletic prowess where strength was important. Finally, the *euexia* stood somewhat between the two, emphasizing balance of form rather than physical strength as such. These events must be understood against the backdrop of several lasting features of Greek civilization: its agonistic (competitive) character, the famil-