# *BECOMING A FREAK*
## *Pathways into the Counter-Culture*

D. LAWRENCE WIEDER
Department of Sociology
University of Oklahoma, Norman
DON H. ZIMMERMAN
Department of Sociology
University of California, Santa Barbara

**The examination of change** at the personal and societal level raises several sorts of questions. What predisposes individuals to embark on change or "opens them" to the possibility of change? In a population of individuals predisposed to or open to change, what accounts for the fact that some persons change and others do not? Finally, among those who have changed or are changing, what is the process of that change? Although these are coordinate questions, answers to one of these questions are unlikely to provide answers to the others.

---

AUTHORS' NOTE: *The ethnographic study on which this paper draws was funded by Grant #70-039, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U.S. Department of Justice. The interpretations reported here do not necessarily reflect the policies or official position of the funding agency. The authors would like to acknowledge the generous encouragement and assistance of Dr. Dorothy Miller and Scientific Analysis Corporation. We also wish to thank our research assistants, Ron Kaiman, Steven Plevin, Peter Suczek, Tom Wallace, and Susan Wedow. Thanks are also due to Karen Wieder for her assistance in editing the manuscript.*

YOUTH & SOCIETY, Vol. 7 No. 3, March 1976
©1976 Sage Publications, Inc.



Downloaded from SHAREOK, Persistent Handle URL: https://hdl.handle.net/11244/24903
Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

In this paper, we examine the process of becoming a "freak."[1] Those children of the middle class who apply this label to themselves have largely rejected the values and aspirations of their parents. They condemn ambition and competition and deride conventional attitudes toward the importance of financial and occupational success. Linked to the rejection of the middle-class "success ethic" is an altered view of the morality of pleasure. In place of the subordination of personal pleasure to occupational achievement, freaks elevate personal satisfaction as a standard by which present and future activities and relationships are assessed. Freaks value spontaneity, open-endedness, doing "whatever feels right," and pursuing a "freedom" that is unrestrained by a concern to preserve even the appearance of conventionality. Freaks present a mirror-image of the "straight" or middle-class world; freak culture is, in this sense, a counter-culture which has turned the values of conventional middle-class society upside down.

This characterization is, of course, an idealization—few individuals are capable of perfectly embodying cultural ideals.[2] Moreover, to even approach such a life-style requires transcending an essentially "straight" upbringing and undergoing a personal transformation.

In another paper (Wieder and Zimmerman, 1974), we described and analyzed the social and historical conditions which impinged upon the present generation of youth, creating the climate for and part of the content of the counter-culture. Here, we focus on the process of individual (and, to some extent, cultural) change itself as a self-initiated and socially supported therapeutic strategy which is in some sense comparable to undertaking a course of psychotherapy.

Our choice of a therapeutic analogy is not entirely a theorist's election. In our ethnographic studies of 1970 to 1971,[3] we were struck by the similarities between what appeared to be entailed in becoming a freak and various programs of therapy (particularly the more existential and

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

growth-oriented modes).[4] This observation, and the fact that the counter-culture is a *chosen* way of life, led us to view the transformation of straight youth into freaks as a more or less explicit and self-conscious commitment to change and to a search for the means to effect the change.

The idea of self-directed change refers to the following observations: (1) persons engaged in becoming freaks engage in activities which appear to us to be strategies which are similar to various therapeutic modalities; (2) persons so engaged furnish rationales for those activities which are close to or compatible with the rationales undergirding the therapeutic processes; and (3) the persons we observed explicitly describe their movement into the counter-culture as originating in a choice and proceeding in terms of struggle to change their previous conditioning.

Such an analysis makes evident the interpenetration of culture and personality. In rejecting the "old culture," the individual must shed the socialized responses which he learned as the result of being socialized to it. He must change his "personality," in the sense of a set of dispositions to respond affectively to situations in patterned ways. In the process of shedding this conditioning, new responses are learned and a new culture begins to form. That is, the individual is socialized and desocialized, but this process does not occur in a vacuum. It is done with others, receives social support, and in other ways is facilitated by the group. Personal change and social change are not alternative modes of transformation; they act upon each other, and one is not necessarily prior to the other. The new "recruit" to the counter-culture also contributes to its creation.

The individual's active manipulation of his own attitudes, feelings, and social relationships, indeed his social world, may be characterized as self-initiated desocialization (internally) and disengagement from ordinary institutions and interpersonal networks (externally), rather than positive socialization to a set of standards which results in the individual's

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

assuming a well-ordered and more or less routinized round of life. Of course, positive socialization does take place, but it appears to us to be casual and takes relatively little effort, in contrast to the deliberate effort devoted to obtaining freedom from conventional societal constraints. Furthermore, the positive socialization which takes place may come before, during, or after the processes of desocialization and disengagement. A causal connection between the two processes would be difficult to establish with any exactness. Moreover, we should note that the more general subprocesses of desocialization and disengagement can make an individual not only free to be a freak, but also render him free to be or become a Jesus Freak, a follower of Hari Krishna, a wandering holy man in the Indian style, a dope dealer, an active revolutionary, or the like.

We might also note that some of these same subprocesses, especially the external ones, may also be at work in the case of upwardly mobile persons, who may self-consciously reject old friends in favor of new ones within the newly entered social circle, cut off or limit contact with their parents, and adopt new vocabularies and styles of dress.

## THE TRANSFORMATION

The idea of a transformation consisting of a series of steps suggests that there is some necessary sequence to the "steps." In the process of becoming a freak, this is not the case. The two major processes described below, desocialization and disengagement, and their component moves, may occur simultaneously or in different orderings.

Freaks retrospectively see themselves as having been straight at one time. They explicitly recognize themselves as having been raised or "indoctrinated" in middle-class culture. This may be seen in their responses to questions about their

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

plans and prospects when they were seniors in high school. One woman described herself at that time in these words:

> In high school, I think I thought I'd stop whatever I was doing as soon as I got married. And that would be it. You know, just a very traditional middle-class. I would get married and have babies and a family, and I'd do the housework, and that'd be what I'd do. And I wouldn't work, because my husband would support me.

A male college drop-out described his previous vision of his future life in the following terms:

> I could see myself getting married; [it was] something I was eventually supposed to do.... I guess I thought I would [have children] but not for a long time; the same with marriage.... I probably figured I'd be working kind of like my parents do, you know, working in a regular job, setting out on your career type of thing.

But at some point in time, from their own perspective, they changed. They view that change as a choice. Our point is not that freaks do or do not choose (in the sense of displaying "free will"), but that the counter-culture is distinctive in having as one of its constituent features that it is a chosen morality and way of life *from the standpoint of its members.* This feature distinguishes it from most cultures, perhaps even from most contra-cultures, e.g., the convict culture.[5] Like undertaking to change oneself through engaging in a "growth-oriented" course of psychotherapy, becoming a freak is experienced as a self-initiated process of change in values and outlook.

Furthermore, the process of becoming a freak is experienced as continuously choosing. Most steps involve an election of one alternative from a collection of experientially real alternatives, and each step places the individual in a situation which has more alternatives to it than had his previous situation. Though the individual, of course, loses

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

alternatives as well, he experiences the movement toward becoming a freak as giving him increasing control over his own circumstances. It is especially with respect to the control over one's time and geographical placement that this is most vividly experienced.

For freaks, choosing amounts to claiming their own lives from their parents and the society. One graduate school drop-out with an M.A. in social science put the idea this way:

> What I see as important is to make a choice about how to structure my life, as opposed to accepting my life being structured for me by the dominant culture.[6]

Other informants stressed such themes as "you have to be allowed to look around and discover the kind of life you want to lead," and, "everybody has got to do his own thing." Emphasis was placed on "being your own person" independently of, and often in spite of and in opposition to, the patterns prescribed by parents and other authorities.

The freaks we interviewed saw themselves as in the process of seeking new alternatives to the life-style they had rejected. The claiming of one's own life often is at issue when dropping out of school or work is being contemplated. One woman described her decision to drop out of school by saying:

> [In doing schoolwork] I kind of lost track of what I really wanted to do, and I just thought that it would be really good for me to not go to school and not have anything to do . . . and like I wanted to do nothing and try to figure out just what I want to do and [to] get involved with things I wanted to do but . . . couldn't do . . . because I had to study.

Typically, the "choice," or at least the change, occurred for our group of informants after they had left home to enter college. Invariably, the change was brought about through association with peers and quite often involved the introduction to marijuana use. Marijuana is frequently credited

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

with facilitating, even causing, a change in "consciousness," which alters their motives, their conception of themselves, and their conception of the world (Goode, 1970: 83-91). A graduate school drop-out who had had no regular employment for two years characterized the use of marijuana smoking as a tool for changing one's life in the following terms:

> In fact, drugs are seen as a technique or means for breaking down or destroying traditional modes of interaction and modes of behavior and ambitions. I think a lot of people I've met see their drug experiences as having been worthwhile for that reason. They got rid of hang-ups, ego-hassles, the bad shit their parents laid on them, and got hip to the fact that they were being lied to by the government, the schools, the church, and so on.

Whatever the "real" effects of these psychoactive drugs, and however the drugs have these effects, the social circumstances surrounding their use have potent and independent effects—they are conducive to establishing and maintaining close personal relationships. These relationships offer considerable social support for acting upon the choice of becoming a freak and facilitate the development of common understandings. Marijuana, for example, is preeminently a social drug, i.e., it is typically smoked on social occasions; supplies are shared as a moral matter; it is purchased (at the "street level") through friends or friends of friends; the "joint" (marijuana cigarette) or pipe is invariably passed around among those present; and these activities are recognized as mutual participation in a practice which at the time was felonious and disapproved of by the parental generation.

Thus, smoking marijuana served as one important source of social integration for youth in the counter-culture, and it is not surprising that culturally significant effects are credited to its use. Indeed, following Becker's (1963) argument that marijuana is seen by smokers to have such effects may

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

substantially contribute to experiencing those effects, quite apart from and in addition to the social organizational consequences of its mode of consumption. It should be clearly understood, however, that marijuana use is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of becoming a freak, although its use is widespread in the counter-culture. One can, as a freak, be "into" meditation and eschew all drugs, and many very straight people smoke marijuana.

## AFFECT AND INTELLECT

What the transition from being straight to being a freak means to the individual making the transition derives in part from its having been seen as a choice and in part from the internal and external struggle that that choice precipitates. The freaks we talked to spoke freely of struggle. When they referred to an internal struggle, they referred to the disjuncture of intellect and affect they experienced (and often were still experiencing) in attempting to live in and "work out" the freak life-style. In some ways, this internal struggle is comparable to the discomfort and confusion that is experienced by patients in the course of psychotherapy, where change is foreseen and chosen but not yet achieved. One nomadic male college drop-out described the "struggle" in these terms:

> You can't lose up-tightness . . . you can't immediately get rid of eighteen years of conditioning into your niche, you know, you have to fight your way out of it. . . . You've been pressured to conform and to take on middle-class neuroses—of private property and alienated labor and all this shit—shoved, shoved down your throat until you're throwing it up, man. And you can't get rid of that immediately.

Freaks speak of having to work to "bring their feelings into line," that is, to align their affective responses to the new situations they encounter, to the new activities in which

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

they engage, and to the new orientation to situations and activities that are preferred by them. They encounter these new situations by virtue of their choice and, perhaps paradoxically, strive to act toward them in terms of their "real" emotional responses,[7] which may be at odds with their *immediate* feelings about some action or situation. One informant put the apparent paradox this way: "the whole trip with me is 'becoming.' It is to lose enough up-tightness so that I can do what I [really] want to do."

Their reference to "being straight" in large part appears to implicate their (previously) socialized emotional responses to the new way of life in the counter-culture. They liken their "straightness" to neurotic symptoms, and call them "hang-ups" which must be overcome. Hang-ups, for example, are encountered when the individual (inappropriately) feels jealousy (over the sexual encounters of her "old man" or his "old lady"); feels shame about the exposure of his or her body; feels shame about the character of his or her sexual desires; is unable to act upon sexual desire; is unable to share possessions; feels the need to relate to others in terms of rights and obligations; feels the need for privacy; feels the need to plan; feels the need for more than enough money to survive; feels the need to accumulate material objects; feels the need to enhance his or her reputation and be recognized by others as "someone special"; feels the need to dominate others (called being on a "power trip"); and when the individual feels anxious in the face of (1) being unable to predict the behavior of others, (2) being without stable relationships, or (3) being without stable employment.

## DESOCIALIZATION AND THE MASTERY OF FEARS

If a fundamental basis of culture as a normative framework for directing action involves the organization and mobilization of affect as one ground for acting, we would expect that an individual who is in the process of becoming a member of a "new culture" which is, in part, in conflict with

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

or in contradiction to his "old culture," must find some way of managing his feelings to bring them into line with the imperatives of action embodied in the "new culture." Furthermore, the development of the counter-culture *as a culture* depends upon the discovery of some methods for liberating the feelings of its members from the normative content of the "old culture," so as to make those feelings available as a routine basis for daily activities which are in conformity with the normative or quasi-normative structures of the "new culture."

Affects function in several different ways as internalized mechanisms of social control which keep action in line with the imperatives of a culture and which, thereby, operate to restrict the individual's real freedom, even when he does not experience restriction (Durkheim, 1938).[8] Becoming a participant in an oppositional culture, therefore, necessarily involves overcoming conventional feelings, i.e., it necessarily involves desocialization from internalized conventional patterns. Of particular interest are those devices which freaks employ to overcome such culturally prescribed and/or induced affects as "indignation," "shame," "guilt," and especially "anxiety" and "anticipatory anxiety."

An experience of one of our informants illustrates the results of acting against conventional feelings and the relief that is provided by "breaking through" anxiety. It is suggestive of the general strategy which freaks employ in their struggle to obtain both inner and external freedom. In a freak's diary, we came across this remark: "We [the diarist and her friend] talked for a while about how parents and society fuck up our heads." We asked for elaboration and received the following story which we tape recorded.

> Well, she [the diarist's friend] was saying that she had been on the [women's liberation] retreat, and she had climbed up in the mountains with us and sat with us, and some of us had taken off our clothes, and some hadn't.... She told me the reason she didn't was she was really inhibited, and like when she was a child, her parents had made her feel really self-conscious about her

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

> body and made her feel ashamed. And she felt really hung up about it. And what had happened that night was that she had gotten really sick and thrown up, and some of the women that were over there took off her clothes and gave her a bath. She said that was a real experience for her, because like she had never taken off her clothes in front of . . . another woman before, and . . . it was a real liberating experience. Like it had to happen that way, because there was no other way she could have broken down all the pressures and things that she'd built up in her head—all kinds of things society does to you and her parents and everything. So . . . she said it was a horrible experience to go through, but like she had to go through it, and she felt much better now that she had.

This woman's anxiety was aroused by the prospect of violating that morality which had been inculcated in her by parents and others, and that anxiety prevented her from undressing, even though she herself was ideologically (morally) committed to the propriety of nudity and wished it for herself.[9] If a "new culture" to which one is becoming socialized requires acts which are forbidden by the old, or if one is merely trying to free oneself from cultural restraints, some method for managing anxiety must be employed. Freaks deliberately employ a method for dealing with pseudoneurotic, anticipatory, and "ordinary" anxiety that the women's liberationist quoted above discovered by accident.

One method of desocialization on the individual level is deliberate action in opposition to the constraining conventional feelings, that is, to override one's anxiety and, thus, to master one's fear. At this level, we may think of such a solution as a therapeutic strategy. The technique is similar to Frankl's psychotherapeutic method of paradoxical intention, in which:

> the patient . . . wish[es] that the feared thing will happen to him. . . . [In so doing, he] objectivize[s] his neurosis by distancing himself from his symptoms. . . . the patient . . . call[s]

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

> on . . . man's spiritual capacity to resist, and by his inner freedom choose[s] a specific attitude in any given situation. [Gerz, 1967: 206][10]

Frankl's method is especially tailored to that form of anticipatory anxiety in which the individual fears the symptoms of anxiety themselves and either avoids the situations that initiate them in the first place (a phobic reaction) or attempts to fight the symptoms as such while confronting the situation (an obsessive compulsive reaction). In the latter case, the attempt to fight the symptom (e.g., perspiration) merely enhances it. The use of a paradoxical intention (e.g., trying hard to perspire) tends to eliminate the symptom. The freak's strategy is similar, in that he is acceptant of the symptom but does not permit it to prevent him from doing the action. In effect, he tells himself (or is told by his friends), "Go ahead and do it; if you perspire, that's okay. Whatever you are or do—because that is *who* you are—is okay."[11]

One of our informants carried out this general strategy with some precision. For several years, he had had a desire to travel in foreign countries and had no good reason not to do so, save his own diffuse anxieties about leaving the country of his birth and having to contend with a strange environment. He recognized that his anxiety was a severe constraint on his freedom and sought unsuccessfully to overcome it. Then, after talking the matter over at great length with his friends, he decided to go ahead with a journey despite his fears, while nevertheless feeling very acceptant of them. The actual anxiety he experienced on the initial steps of his journey was not nearly as severe as he had anticipated, though he had to, in effect, "catapult" himself into the first steps in the face of his anxiety-ridden anticipation. After this experience, he has had no further hesitation to embark upon foreign travel.

Often, the fear which is aroused by contemplating or beginning the act is overcome by the discovery that few or no

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

negative consequences (either socially, in the form of sanctions, or internally, such as the loss of control) are incurred by doing the prohibited act. Garfinkel (1967: 68-70) has found that for many the discovery that the vaguely anticipated sanctions do not actually occur is invigorating and invites repetition of the same form of deviance. The Freudians theorize and find that when one "acts out" those impulses which are blocked by "neurotic" and "moral" anxiety, the anxiety itself is dissipated. Freud's proposals have special relevance for freaks, because their culture invites those actions which are most likely to be blocked by "moral" and "neurotic" anxiety.[1 2]

The same general strategy may be employed where anxiety is not a block to action, but where other feelings supporting actions consistent with conventional patterns must be overcome. Freaks consciously attempt to practice giving, being "cool," refraining from judging people they encounter, doing without possessions, doing without all the conventional sources and supports for being respected, and so forth. One informant described the effort to be "cool" and "giving" in this way:

> Part of the ethic is being cool to other people. That's fine, you know. And people who aren't cool force themselves to be cool, and . . . you know, like that pain . . . is like your blessing—is like the cleansing of you.

Another related solution joins the individual or psychological level with the group or cultural level. (The examples mentioned thus far, of course, have also employed this strategy.) This method involves the public avowal of one's conventional feelings and discussing such "hang-ups" with others in the life-style. One's hang-ups are virtually always pertinent topics for discussion, and one's friends and "brothers" are expected to listen, to be acceptant, to help, and to share their own hang-ups. The preferred form of relationship between freaks and the preferred way of conceiving of oneself and one's own feelings appear to be very compatible

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

with the therapeutic ethic that is propounded by encounter or therapy group leaders who write about such matters (e.g., Rogers, 1970: 43-68). In brief, freaks value being open and more or less acceptant of their own feelings; they regard it as appropriate to express those feelings. They regard conversations in which their feelings are in immediate interaction with those of another as "communication on a deep level of personal meaning" (Rogers, 1970: 54) and believe that such interactions are valuable in themselves as well as for their effects. They attempt to refrain from judgments, especially moral judgments, about the appropriateness of someone else's actions, attitudes, or feelings. They hold the ideal of valuing another person as a fellow being, without this implying that a permanent relationship is thereby guaranteed; and in that valuing, they attempt to offer the other the safety to say whatever it is that he feels. They also value physical contact between members of the same and opposite sexes as a method of expressing (typically positive) affect, and in this they are aware of, but ideally not threatened by, the sexual meanings of the physical expression of feeling. Conversations which for ordinary members of the middle-class would be morally suspect are, for freaks, merely a way of "getting a little help from his friends."[13]

Often, in such a supportive context, the individual-level solution of going against conventional feelings is encouraged, and the individual's actions are accorded group approval. Thus, the group builds its culture or quasi-culture by encouraging and supporting its members in their separate attempts to overcome the residue of "old culture" training.

## DISENGAGEMENT

### BREAKING WITH PARENTS AND OTHER STRAIGHTS

In addition to dealing specifically with constraining feelings, the process of becoming a freak involves other steps which lead the individual away from the habits and attitudes

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

of his background. These "other steps" disengage the individual from his immediate social environment in such a way as to minimize situational reinforcement of middle-class hang-ups. The process of disengagement consists of the withdrawal of commitment to, and participation in, such major conventional roles as son or daughter, good friend (vis-à-vis conventional straights), student (when the student role is occupationally relevant), and employee (in a middle-class occupation). The individual's role partners in each of these roles have the potential power to reinforce and reawaken compliance to the conventional moral order. Thus, disengagement has both internal and external consequences.

By disengaging, the individual not only alters his external environment, but his inner world as well, since, as Radcliffe-Brown (1937: 531) said some years ago: "The sanctions existing in a community constitute motives in the individual for the regulation of his conduct in conformity with usage." Thus, one may alter his inner life by manipulating the immediate environment in such a way as to isolate himself from agents of the dominant society who can be counted on to sanction the prevailing moral order. The consequences desired, as well as the methods for achieving them, are comparable to the disengagements that are required of the members of some therapeutic communities–e.g., Synanon (Yablonsky, 1965; Casriel, 1963)–and required by some therapists.

Our data suggest that relationships with parents provided a source of both agony and frustration for freaks as they moved into the counter-culture. Many of our informants provided detailed accounts of the deep conflicts they were experiencing in these relationships and specified the criticisms their parents had of them. Conflict between generations is, of course, nothing new, and has been regarded as an inevitable consequence of the child's quest for independence and identity. However, movement into the counter-culture adds a further dimension to the clash between parent and child, since the values of the counter-culture turn upside

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

down the cherished beliefs and practices of the parental generation. To the extent that parents are implacably hostile to their offspring's new life-style, successful concealment or a total break in ties would seem almost prerequisite to a full commitment to the counter-culture. While few cases are this extreme, freaks often recognize the necessity for some distance from their family. For example, one girl told us:

> I know I had to have a change. I knew that in order to go through a certain amount of changes, [I would have to] get away from my family—that it was necessary to get away from my family to go through those changes.

The attenuation of ties with parents seems essential for two reasons. First, from the point of view of a young person, parents represent and are described as a strong and provoking reinforcement of the "old culture." By their often quite unpleasant and disturbing recriminations, parents appear (in the accounts of our informants) to intend to "re-awaken" as well as to "re-instill" compliance with dominant culture values. While these efforts are rarely productive of their intended outcome, our informants indicate that they often do create an inner discomfort—anxiety—in the child, which is defended against by either angry outbursts or temporary, begrudging compliance. Insofar as parents react strongly to their children's life-style, the child must defend himself against those attacks (leaving him and his parents in a conflict-ridden relationship) or reconcile himself to such powerful disapproval (a rare and difficult psychological achievement) or cut himself off, totally or partially, from such negative feedback (typically reported to us as the easiest solution.[14] Attempts to conceal aspects of the life-style from parents are looked upon as a "cop-out" (if not a betrayal) by other freaks, and individuals are advised to be "out-front" about their lives.

Second, on ideological grounds, some degree of separation from parents can assume a symbolic meaning, namely, a renunciation of established society on an immediate and

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

personal level. It is a voluntary estrangement from the "old culture," what it stands for, and some of its resources, and, at the same time, the estrangement represents a commitment to the "new culture." In more practical terms, the weakening of interpersonal ties with parents, other relatives, and previous friends who are straight becomes a method of "freeing-up" alternatives of conduct heretofore constrained by a system of rights and obligations which, while operative, are difficult to ignore completely. Total renunciation of family, however, was a step few of our informants would contemplate and fewer still completed.

### DROPPING OUT

"Dropping out," as a method of disengagement, has one of the same general effects as breaking with parents and straight friends, for it cuts off the important and influential lines of communication which are offered by authority roles (in the form of employers or teachers) and by collegial roles (in the form of fellow professionals or fellow "serious" students). "Dropping out" removes the constraints imposed by what freaks view as authoritarian and oppressive forms of social organization, principally the university and full-time, career-oriented occupations in business and government organizations. The demands exercised by the student and occupational roles are viewed as both corrupt and corrupting and, in any event, incompatible with freedom and spontaneity.

Just as in the case of disengaging from relationships with parents and straight friends, both inner and external freedom are at stake in "dropping out." Externally, the roles of professional and student place demands on the allocation of the individual's time, on his performance, attitude, and in some instances dress. Internally, they demand that the individual be (in other areas of his life) a person appropriate to the role. While it is possible for some to live what amounts to two distinct moral lives, many of our informants told us that when they tried to manage this schism, they experienced

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

severe inner conflict while trying to do so. Each identity (freak and professional, or freak and "serious" student) demands an allegiance which is so great as to render the other identity highly dissonant. This means that the individual who attempts to lead two lives is likely to experience negative affect in both areas of his life. Some freaks have reported to us that they experienced guilt while at work by seeing some of the activities which were required of them as inconsistent with their real allegiance to "freakdom." Some spoke of the anxiety they experienced while at home–fear that their activities, if revealed, would lose them their profession, as well as guilt if they were "supposed to" have been doing work or studies at home, entertaining appropriate others, and the like. One result of this is that many highly educated freaks prefer "lowly" occupations. We know, for example, a garbage collector with a B.A., a gardener with a Ph.D., an itinerant carpenter-handyman with an M.A., a carpenter's apprentice with an M.A., and so on. One important reason for preferring lowly jobs is that they make fewer demands on one's allegiances and play a much less significant part in one's identity and, therefore, are productive of many fewer guilts and anxieties for a freak (Wieder and Zimmerman, 1974). These rationales were explicitly verbalized by our informants.

The way in which the external demands of the roles of "serious" student or professional are incompatible with freak life-styles can be partially illustrated by raising the matter of marijuana use once again. The majority of marijuana smoking appears to occur in social situations, when people "get together." Gatherings happen when friends visit each other or when they decide to go somewhere together (e.g., to a movie or some other public event, to the mountains, and so forth) or when they decide to have a party.

A relatively obvious factor influencing the frequency of social gatherings is *time.* In simple terms, a gathering consumes time–the time spent in sociable interaction and the time spent in transit to and from the gathering place for those not residing there. Time emerges as a significant factor

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

if we view it as a zero-sum commodity, i.e., time spent in one fashion subtracts from the total time available to an individual to pursue alternative activities.

These elementary considerations permit us to focus on the role of freak culture in shaping the pattern of gatherings in the community and, indirectly, on the amount of involvement in drug use as a pastime. This can be seen clearly if we note that the commitments individuals make to occupational, educational, and other pursuits tend to determine the amount of "free time" they have available for social gatherings.

Some informants interviewed in our study have retained relatively heavy commitments and, hence, social contact tends to occur in "off-duty" hours—typically, evenings and weekends. These commitments, and the consequent limitation they impose on the availability of the individual for sociable interaction, are usually known to friends and taken into account by them. To be sure, such commitments do not mean that a given individual does not smoke marijuana. It does mean that the occasions upon which he may be most likely to smoke (and most likely to smoke heavily) do not develop as frequently for him as they do for others. Moreover, individuals vary in their capacity to perform activities when "stoned." Hence, commitment to one or another task represents a concrete consideration to be entertained on those occasions when smoking marijuana emerges as a possible activity. In addition, as suggested earlier, marijuana smoking is a social activity, and its initiation implies a subsequent course of sociable activities. In terms of task accomplishment, frequent and lengthy gatherings decrease the time available for work or study. When gatherings are typically accompanied by smoking, the consequence is often an even greater consumption of time and, for many individuals, an inability to perform a range of tasks.

The emphasis on the "here-and-now," the high valuation of "spontaneity," and the rejection of traditional middle-class emphases on work, career, and the rational use of time

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

"free" the freak from obligations that might otherwise constrain his movement and activity. Hence, "dropping out" (at least to some degree) facilitates the disposition of each day's activity in a culturally valued way, namely, "spontaneously" (Zimmerman and Wieder, 1975).

In "dropping out," individuals thus reclaim their own lives and finally experience what they do as the thing they wanted to do for themselves. Moreover, the dissolution of interpersonal and institutional links to conventional society can be viewed as "disconnecting" the lines of communication, and thus potential control, from the straight world to the world of freaks. Isolation from conventional social settings and straight persons goes hand in hand with greater involvement in freak social settings and increased ingroup interaction. These conditions facilitate "overcoming middle-class hang-ups" and developing appropriate emotional bases for action within the "new culture."

### INSULATION FROM COMMITMENTS

Associated with "dropping out" are a set of strategies for (1) avoiding certain kinds of commitments which could generate extensive and stable obligations, binding individuals to other individuals or places, and (2) engaging in certain kinds of "exercises" which build and reinforce favored modes of interaction within the counter-culture. The avoidance of commitments is a particularly crucial move, since it establishes the basic condition for freedom and personal choice. Commitments which bind are avoided by subjecting present and prospective relationships to a process of rationalization through which they are assessed and often discussed with others in terms of their meaning and consequence for the individual and his choices, rather than on such traditional grounds as kinship or social convention. Thus, as in some therapies, the freak brings his life under review in relationship to the issue of individual responsibility and choice.

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

One avoidance strategy involves eschewing conventional marriage, which is viewed as tying individuals together independently of the state of their relationship at a given time and without regard to individual desires. The following remarks by a male informant illustrate the way in which relationships are scrutinized in terms of their meaning to the individual:

> I don't think I'll ever get married. I might have children someday, you know, if the opportunity presents itself. . . . I don't see getting married. . . . Like in a relationship, you're committed as long as . . . the relationship's good; when it's not good you should end it. My relationship with [my woman] now is good—[we're] living together, and we're digging it, and we're growing, I feel. If we were married . . . it would be . . . the same way if it stopped being good. It seems to be that marriage replaces love in America. In America now, once you get married you don't have to love each other any more, and I think that's kind of screwed. . . . Marriage now in my relationship with [my woman], marriage would hurt it, you know, 'cause you'd feel hemmed in maybe—your relationship would feel hemmed in, and that's not good.

Avoidance of marriage is one aspect of a more generalized (and often explicit) caution about assuming any obligation to specific others extending beyond whatever proprieties govern immediate relationships. Put another way, while freaks can count on each other in most cases for mutual aid and assistance, the freakier freaks cannot count on each other beyond the immediate present. This means that they cannot be dependent on, and therefore potentially controlled by, specific fellow freaks. The notion of freedom, of personal growth, and the value placed on experimentation and movement all presuppose the possibility of abrupt withdrawal from present friends and circumstances in favor of something new. For example, freaks at the core of the counter-culture appear to be very geographically mobile. One consequence of this mobility is the development of a widely distributed and extensive network of friends which con-

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

tributes to the solution of problems like transportation, food, and shelter when the individual is "on the move."

Beyond the lack of conventional obligations and dependencies tying him to specific other individuals, the freakier freak deliberately avoids commitments to activities which could exercise some sovereignty over his life. That is, he first of all avoids types of employment that entail much beyond the performance of a day's work for a day's pay. Furthermore, he may avoid getting too deeply into any enterprise. For example, one of our informants was engaged in building geodesic domes, an activity which he found enjoyable and from which he earned money sufficient for his immediate needs. He told us he intended to quit this line of endeavor soon and do something else. He did not want dome-building to become "his thing" to the exclusion of other, unknown possibilities, i.e., he did not want it to constrain his life. Parallel to the avoidance of specific entanglements is the more general tactic of eschewing plans or schedules. The freakier freak explicitly and consciously does not plan, for he recognizes that plans commit him to a prestructured future, and he does not want to be constrained in that way (some will not permit themselves to be constrained in that way), even if only the immediate day is in question.

Above, we mentioned that relationships between freaks, while ideally based on an absence of enduring rights and obligations and on the sovereignty of genuine or authentic desires on the part of those involved to relate to one another, could nonetheless be characterized by certain proprieties. Certain generalized norms do appear to govern relationships between freaks. One of these norms is that of *sharing.* In a manner similar to others who are impoverished, e.g., the underprivileged worker (Davis, 1946), the ghetto dweller (Liebow, 1967), the convict (Clemmer, 1940), and the hobo (Anderson, 1923), the freak is expected to share what he has with his "brothers"—his drugs, his money, his food, his shelter, his transportation, and so on. Freaks, to the extent that they have moved toward the center of the counter-

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

culture, tend to be impoverished. No one individual will typically possess all the resources that facilitate even a simple mode of living. One method of utilizing such resources as do exist is through an ethic of sharing.

Sharing, while it does not elicit such troublesome emotional responses as fear, guilt, or anxiety, is nonetheless a difficult practice in which to engage with equanimity, given attitudes toward property in the "old culture." While limited sharing is characteristic of most groups, it is central to freaks for both ideological and practical reasons. One exercise in learning to share is, of course, practice in sharing and practice in *giving*. While the lack of possessions and resources is, in one sense, a problem, it is also facilitating for the freak life-style. Possessions, if they are extensive, pose practical difficulties for one who moves frequently; and, of course, their care, protection, and the effort involved in accumulating them require time, attention, and energy which are themselves constraining. Resources, e.g., a job or a house, while providing for necessities, also tie the individual down.

Practice in giving one's possessions to others, and sharing those that one has, both develops the ideologically appropriate feelings and attitudes and tends to reduce the number of possessions the individual controls. It is impressive to note how acutely freaks recognize the ways in which the social structure of the conventional society constrains individual conduct. They are particularly perceptive in recognizing the ways in which contractual relationships (and the assorted attitudes and affects associated with them) can bind the individual. Thus, as part of the process of becoming a freak, the individual moves away from binding interpersonal ties (particularly of the sort that impose significant rights and obligations between the parties) and away from the constraints that property and property production and accumulation impose on him.

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

## NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION: LOOKING LIKE A FREAK

While much more is involved in becoming a freak than assuming a particular hair and dress style, the role of these external symbols merits comment. First, it should be obvious that such trappings are easily acquired and discarded. They are, furthermore, exploitable–that is, anyone can acquire them. They can be appropriated, packaged, and marketed for a more general population. Unlike other features of being a freak, they can be integrated into more conventional life-styles. Hence, there is a sense in which "looking like a freak" is a shaky basis for establishing membership in that community.

Despite these considerations, the adoption of freaky dress and hair (which is visible to strangers in ways that other more central aspects of the life-style are not) can lead to both real and perceived consequences for the movement of middle-class youth to the core of the counter-culture. One aspect of the real consequences has to do with the response of many adults to freaky dress and hair. It is relatively clear that at least some adults treat the appearance of the freak as an indicator of often vague, but certainly grave, moral depravity, including at least the use of drugs. This response may in its turn lead to various forms of discrimination, including harassment by police. Freaks have complained to us of difficulty in securing places to live, in gaining even menial employment, of being insulted in public places, and of unwarranted police surveillance. Even if their claims to mistreatment are exaggerated, the freaks' appearance functions for them as a persuasive account of things that happen, i.e., disappointments, snubs, a stop-and-search by police, and so on are attributable to the straight society's response to the way they dress and the way they wear their hair.

Thus, while dress and hair style are relatively easy "changes" to effect, adopting a "freaky" appearance is a form of risk-taking in which personal choice is affirmed in the face of conventional disapproval. Moreover, once ac-

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

quired, they tend to expose the individual to negative responses, real or perceived, from straight society. One consequence, then, of adopting these symbols is to encounter a boundary between oneself (and others like oneself) and straight society. Whatever distance between oneself and, say, the parental generation may have been experienced initially, it is likely that the distance will be increased, given the general response to these symbols. Such a distance, achieved as a consequence of the exercise of personal choice, establishes a necessary (but not sufficient) condition of self-transformation.

This subprocess, as described thus far, appears to be formally identical to the process variously described as secondary deviance, labeling, and societal response, as these are described by Becker (1963), Erikson (1966), Lemert (1948, 1951), and the symbolic interactionist role theorists, e.g., Hughes (1945) and Turner (1962). One could add that for whatever reason someone adopts a freaky appearance, he is likely to be responded to by straights in such a way as to increase his social distance from them which, in turn, is likely to motivate him to proceed with other steps along the way to becoming a full-fledged freak. In this sense, the causes of an initial step toward becoming a freak ("primary deviance," in Lemert's terms, 1948, 1951) may well be polygenetic, while there is, nevertheless, considerable uniformity with respect to the process of becoming a freak.

But it would be easy to overstress the importance of negative societal reaction to freaks. Lemert (1948: 28) postulates that secondary deviance occurs when:

> the person begins to employ his deviant behavior or a role based on it *as a means of defense, attack, or adjustment to the overt and covert problems created by the societal reaction to it.* [emphasis in the original]

In a later development of this theory (Lemert, 1951: 22-23), he says that the deviant's patterns of social participation are restricted. While this is the case for freaks, the intensity,

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

frequency, and especially the permanence of negative reactions to freaks are not comparable to those experienced by, for example, ex-convicts or formerly institutionalized mental patients. Furthermore, few of the freak's patterns of conduct are easily analyzable as *necessary* adaptations to a social situation which is tightly confined by the negative responses of others.

There is, perhaps, a more important role that the freak's appearance plays in the process of becoming a full-fledged freak—the part that it plays in establishing relationships with other freaks. The external symbols of hair and dress serve to define membership, at least potential membership, in a brotherhood of freaks. While the informants we questioned almost uniformly shied away from treating dress and hair as sure criteria of freakiness (and with good reason, since young undercover narcotics agents can look quite freaky), it also appeared to be the case that in the day-to-day interactions of these youth, hair and dress (often in conjunction with speech patterns and demeanor) were relied upon as definitive of membership in the absence of any information to the contrary. Thus, strangers can meet and become quite friendly in a short period of time, sharing whatever they have to share, offering each other shelter, transportation, drugs, food, and the like.[15]

It should be emphasized that while hair and dress function as the basis of initial contact, given what typically follows, a "weekend freak" or inexperienced undercover man might run into subsequent difficulties. Our point is that, at least at the time our data were collected, freaky dress and hair functioned to draw boundaries and gather freaks together, reinforcing interaction within the ingroup and attenuating outside contacts. Thus, adopting hair and dress styles, while easy, can also be troublesome. These changes can be an aspect of an overall transformation and function in support of other life-style changes.

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

## SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

We have described some of the features of becoming a freak: the process involves choosing both initially and continuously, and the choices precipitate an internal and external struggle. The struggle is carried on by using procedures of desocialization in combating anxiety and other feelings which constrain the individual's action and which, in effect, compel his compliance to the conventional order. The external struggle is dealt with by procedures of disengaging the individual from a constraining social environment by his deliberate withdrawal of commitment and participation from major conventional roles. The effects of disengagement are amplified by the use of procedures for avoiding those commitments which could generate extensive and stable obligations (or merely circumstances) which bind individuals to other individuals, places, or specific activities. In addition, there is the practice of adopting freaky attire and mannerisms, which has disengaging effects by serving as a source of negative identification for straights and which also solicits both contact with and trust from other freaks, thereby facilitating the internal and external struggle.

We have suggested that the process of becoming a freak can be viewed as a collection of steps or moves, each of which is consequential to some degree. Our remarks further imply that becoming a freak can be viewed, in some sense, as an instructable matter and is a project that can be accomplished in relatively definite ways. It remains an open question as to how this collection is ordered.

For now, we prefer to view this collection of steps as occasionally relevant in the sense that particular occasions, or a series of occasions, motivate their use. As occasioned procedures, they are made available and become used to deal with problems that have arisen by virtue of preceding steps taken. No particular motivation need be assumed for any given first step, i.e., the paths that lead into the counterculture and their initial starting points may be diverse. The

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

relative homogeneity that is recognized as the counter-culture appears to be the consequence of the uses of such procedures as desocialization and disengagement in whatever order these procedures are employed in the process of becoming a freak.

## NOTES

1. The young adults we studied used the term to refer to themselves. From our point of view, the socially employed label "freak" organizes our thinking about and sensitizes us to a particular life-style which occurs as a part of the youth counter-culture. The context and historical causes of the counter-culture and what predisposes individuals to affiliate with it has been analyzed in a variety of ways (see Altbach and Laufer, 1972; Flacks, 1971; Foss, 1972; Keniston, 1960, 1971; Reich, 1970; Rozak, 1969; Slater, 1970; Wieder and Zimmerman, 1974).

2. Becoming a freak means becoming more or less a freak. From the point of view of the individuals involved, some freaks are "freakier" (or less straight) than others. Freaks use such indicators of "freakiness" as the extent of involvement in ordinary economic pursuits, how often someone is "stoned," the extent of "sexual liberation," and so forth.

3. Our remarks are primarily based on materials gathered from 60 informants in a year-long ethnographic study of the counter-culture in the student community of Isla Vista, adjacent to the University of California, Santa Barbara. Our research was designed to discover the features of daily life within the context of the counter-culture. Since our study design was not longitudinal, our characterization of the process of becoming a freak is based on inferences from retrospective accounts provided by informants, as well as their descriptions of their current circumstances and future prospects.

Starting with the trusted friends and acquaintances of our research assistants and then going to the friends of these friends, we eventually came to have informant contracts with 60 freaks. This group had a mean age of 21.7 years, was 50% male, had a father whose mean annual income was $18,225, and had a typical tenure in the counter-culture of one to three years. Fifty-eight per cent of our informants were currently enrolled in college or graduate school (75% of those enrolled were in the social sciences), 50% had communal living arrangements with two or more roommates of mixed sexes, and 100% used marijuana, while 85% had had experience with LSD. Although we employed a variety of qualitative techniques (field notes dealing with various "gatherings" of freaks, tape-recorded seminar-interview discussions with five to six persons simultaneously, nonstructured interviews in which the biographies of 20 freaks were reconstructed, and some specialized ethnographic semantic devices for uncovering folk taxonomies of drugs), our principal research tool was the diary/diary-interview (Zimmerman and Wieder, forthcoming), which was used with all of our 60 informants.

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

Informants were paid $10 for keeping diaries covering a period of seven consecutive days, with at least one entry for each day. They were instructed to describe the activities in which they engaged sequentially throughout their days, noting who was involved in them, of what they consisted, when and where they occurred, and whatever logistics were involved in carrying off the activity.

After the diary was received, we scrutinized it to prepare questions for a diary-interview. A single diary would often generate 100 questions to be asked of the informant. While much of the diary-interview asked the informant to expand on matters described in the diary, the interview also functioned to tie the specific events of the informant's days to the community's more general world view, complete with its accompanying system of relevancies, priorities, proprieties, and cultural recipes. These tape-recorded (and later transcribed) interviews sometimes lasted up to five hours.

The theoretically relevant descriptions which resulted from this method were generated over the course of gathering the data, rather than being simple summary descriptions of what we finally learned. We continuously theorized about our findings "as of today." We engaged in a self-corrective, continuous process of analysis and data-gathering guided by that analysis. Our systematic use of provisional working hypotheses bears strong resemblance to the process of "analytic induction" (Cressey, 1950, 1953; Denzin, 1970; Lindesmith, 1947; Robinson, 1951; Turner, 1953; Znaniecki, 1934), in which the researcher alternates between formulating the phenomena and gathering new data which he uses to reformulate his ideas. At each stage, the present formulation accounts for or encompasses all the observables at hand. Our end product was, however, not causal theory, as it is in analytic induction, but empirically warranted, theoretically relevant description.

The sequential nature of our analysis and data-gathering resulted in findings which consist of something we might call invariant ideal types. They are invariant in the sense that they are consistent with all the observables at hand (no case contradicts them), but they must nonetheless be characterized as ideal, because comparable data were not collected from all informants. That is, as more and more diaries were collected and the results of diary-interviews inspected, each successive diary was subjected to increasingly specific and refined interrogation.

In addition, the process built in a partially self-corrective mechanism. Each question which was directed at a diary writer, even if it were merely a request for additional detail, functioned as an implicit, local hypothesis. The answers to such questions provide for the possibility of disconfirming some previously held notion. Thus, the diary/diary-interview method is, in part, a continuous process of challenging and refining the investigator's conceptions. The investigator ends up with a description which is consistent with all that he has observed, even though it is *possible* that such findings are not consistent with what might potentially be found out from all the informants the investigator has contacted. Thus, in some sense, the findings must be regarded as provisional. It should also be noted that the very way that the resulting description is arrived at in this form of data-gathering and analysis precludes any findings concerning distributions or even distinct countertypes.

Finally, in the case of our description of the stages involved in becoming a freak, the particular sense in which all cases were consistent with the data must be

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

elaborated. While the process of becoming a freak is an empirical process, its stages also are cultural recipes. While persons engage in it, it also "exists" as cultural knowledge of what to do in order to achieve the social status and "inner state" of freaky freak. Our informants were at various stages of completing this process, and many never did complete it. All our data are consistent, however, with the proposal that all of our informants knew all of these "steps" and considered them as likely prospects for their own future if they had not already employed them. Over the course of our contacts with them, some of our informants became more freaky in the sense that they progressed through some of these stages, especially the latter ones.

4. It is interesting to speculate on the extent to which the diffusion of the methods and ideals of various humanistic psychologies into middle-class culture has influenced the development of the counter-culture. Perhaps the availability of techniques for personal change represented by the ideas drawn from various therapeutic regimes furnished the resources for translating a set of distinctive social circumstances into a commitment to an alternative life-style and culture (cf. Rozak, 1969). Whatever the source of these ideas, however, we must note that the use of "methods" or "strategies" for change that are comparable to therapeutic strategies does not imply anything positive or negative about the mental health of the youth who employed them. We were not in a position nor did we attempt to assess the mental health or apparent pathologies of any of our subjects. For similar reasons we did not attempt to assess the possibility that some of our subjects had character structures which made the transition into the counter-culture easy as compared to those for whom the transition was an immense struggle.

5. This distinctive feature merits further comment. By virtue of being born into a society, individuals are thrust into a cultural system and, in the ordinary course of socialization, acquire beliefs and affective responses characteristic of the culture. Participation in a subculture often comes about by dint of social circumstances, e.g., by the processes which lead to criminal involvement and incarceration in the case of the convict culture. The emergence of contra-cultures (Cohen, 1955; Yinger, 1960) can be viewed as an adaptive response to the problem posed by incumbency in roles usually thought to be undesirable.

The counter-culture contrasts with the dominant culture, other subcultures, and certainly most contra-cultures by virtue of the fact that individuals are not inducted into it by reason of birth or direct social compulsion. Even granting the efficacy of peer pressure in the direction of becoming a freak, the individual's alternatives are not foreclosed by accident of birth or social status. We see no evidence that the role of freak is so stigmatized that incumbency marks the individual for life. Just as one can convert to some religious sect and subsequently leave it, so too a person can become a freak and then become "straight" at a later time.

6. We noticed that many of our informants often employed a vocabulary drawn from the social sciences when discussing their involvement in the counter-culture. The vast majority of the people we talked to were then or had been university students, and a current topic of inquiry in academic circles was the counter-culture and allied movements. In this context, the adoption by the counter-culture of terms employed to analyze it is far from mysterious. This

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

reflexivity of social scientific work upon the very subject matter it addresses has been observed by Seeley (1963) and discussed in Wieder and Zimmerman (forthcoming). From our point of view, the finding that our subjects furnished rudimentary analyses of their circumstances poses no difficulties for our present inquiry, since we take it as a feature of the counter-culture that such analyses occur. As we have noted above, involvement in the making of a counter-culture is a self-conscious preoccupation.

7. Largely what they feel their emotional responses *should be* from the standpoint of the ideology to which they are committed.

8. Hallowell (1949: 388) has described some of the relationships between anxiety and social control and concluded that:

> In so far as individuals are motivated to avoid dissocial acts because of the [vague] penalty anticipated, the pseudoneurotic anxiety ["pseudo-neurotic" because the danger is the impulse to engage in forbidden acts] aroused . . . has a positive social function. It is a psychic mechanism that acts as a reinforcing agent in upholding the social code.

9. We should note that the form of anxiety in question here is related to anticipatory anxiety in which the fear of punishment which would result from the prohibited (or otherwise anxiety-provoking) act has never been tested by the individual, nor has the individual even observed others testing the prohibition. Instead, the anticipatory anxiety prevents the individual "from permitting a situation to develop, let alone confronting a situation, in which he has the alternative of acting or not with respect to a rule" (Garfinkel, 1967: 70). It is unclear that the case of this woman illustrates this form of anxiety, inasmuch as she did confront a situation of potential nudity, but we do not know whether or not she could have foreseen the possibility that others would undress.

10. We might add that for Frankl (1967: 162), man is able to resist and choose by

> ridicul[ing] his symptoms rather than trying either to run away from them (phobias) or to fight them (obsessive compulsions). . . . Through de-reflection, the patient is enabled to ignore his neurosis by focusing his attention away from himself. He is directed to a life full of potential meanings and values that have a specific appeal to his personal potentialities.

11. The freaks' strategy is similar to Frankl's but not identical. Frankl often instructed his patients to deliberately court *and act out* their symptomology, e.g., deliberately attempt to stutter, shake, perspire, and so on. This, of course, involves acceptance of the symptom rather than rejection of it, and it involves an unwillingness to permit the symptom to control one's action. It is in these latter two features that the freaks' strategy is similar to Frankl's paradoxical intention.

12. The anxiety that freaks strive to overcome in their drive for freedom often looks like what Freud described as neurotic anxiety (1936) and moral anxiety (1933). Whereas true or objective anxiety results from a perception of some real danger in the external world, neurotic anxiety results from the inner perception of what Freud calls an instinctual danger (a threat from the id). It is a

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

fear of one's own impulses which are in conflict with the prohibitions of the ego and super-ego. The anxiety that freaks encounter in attempting to "act out" the solicitations of the counter-culture is similar to neurotic and moral anxiety, in that the counter-culture argues for "acting on impulse," especially in that realm which is most confined by conventional morality--namely, the area of sexuality in its most general sense. Furthermore, freaks often experience great relief when they deliberately act in opposition to their conventional feelings, an effect which Freudians predict when they say that "acting out one's impulses reduces neurotic anxiety by relieving the pressure which the id exerts upon the ego" (Hall, 1954: 67).

13. These moral postures are to some extent tribal, i.e., they apply in full force to interactions between freaks, to some extent to interactions between a freak and someone on the "freak-straight" margin, and only minimally to interactions between a "freaky freak" and "straight-straight."

14. There are at least two other solutions, but these involve the active efforts of the parents as well as their children. Some parents reconcile themselves to their children's life-style, and others even become supportive of it. While we know very little about the frequency and dynamics of such relationships, we have encountered cases in which parents not only participate in marijuana-smoking occasions with their children and their friends, but cases in which the parents provide the drugs as well.

15. A labeling theorist might respond with the argument that the encounters between strangers who are recognizable as "fellow deviants" are nonetheless the result of negative societal reactions, since negative responses from an outgroup usually have the consequence of bringing the ingroup closer together and even play a part in forming the ingroup (e.g., see Becker, 1963: 37-39; and Lemert, 1951: 46). However, the encounters between strangers we mean to be describing appear to be independent from any negative reactions of straights. Instead, the conversational contents of these encounters make reference to presumed shared knowledge, activities, interests, and concerns. Among other things, freaks, like straights, assume that persons of freaky appearance smoke dope and use other drugs.

## REFERENCES

ALTBACH, P. and R. S. LAUFER (1972) The New Pilgrims: Youth Protest in Transition. New York: David McKay.

ANDERSON, N. (1923) The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

BECKER, H. (1963) The Outsiders. New York: Free Press.

CASRIEL, D. (1963) So Fair a House: The Story of Synanon. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

CLEMMER, D. (1940) The Prison Community. Boston: Christopher.

COHEN, A. K. (1955) Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press.

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

CRESSEY, D. R. (1953) Other Peoples' Money. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press.
--- (1950) "Criminal violation of financial trust." Amer. Soc. Rev. 15: 738-743.
DAVIS, A. (1946) "The motivation of the underprivileged worker," in W. F. Whyte (ed.) Industry and Society. New York: McGraw-Hill.
DENZIN, N. K. (1970) The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods. Chicago: Aldine.
DURKHEIM, E. (1947) The Division of Labor in Society. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press.
--- (1938) The Rules of the Sociological Method (trans. by A. Solovay and J. H. Mueller). Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press.
ERIKSON, K. (1966) Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance. New York: John Wiley.
FLACKS, R. (1971) Youth and Social Change. Chicago: Markham.
FOSS, D. (1972) Freak Culture: Life Style and Politics. New York: E. P. Dutton.
FRANKL, V. E. (1967) Psychotherapy and Existentialism. New York: Simon & Schuster.
FREUD, S. (1936) The Problem of Anxiety (trans. by H. A. Bunker). New York: W. W. Norton.
--- (1933) New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis. New York: W. W. Norton.
GARFINKEL, H. (1967) Studies in Ethnomethodology. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
GERZ, H. O. (1967) "The treatment of the phobic and the obsessive-compulsive patient using paradoxical intention," in V. E. Frankl, Psychotherapy and Existentialism. New York: Simon & Schuster.
GOODE, E. (1970) The Marijuana Smokers. New York: Basic Books.
HALL, C. S. (1954) A Primer of Freudian Psychology. New York: Mentor.
HALLOWELL, A. I. (1949) "The social function of anxiety in a primitive society," in D. G. Haring (ed.) Personal Character and Cultural Milieu, revised ed. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse Univ. Press.
HUGHES, E. C. (1945) "Dilemmas and contradictions of status." Amer. J. of Sociology 50: 353-359.
KENNISTON, K. (1971) Youth and Dissent. New York: Harcourt-Brace-Jovanovich.
--- (1960) The Uncommitted. New York: Dell.
LEMERT, E. (1951) Social Pathology. New York: McGraw-Hill.
--- (1948) "Some aspects of a general theory of sociolopathic behavior." Proceedings of the Pacific Soc. Society 16: 23-29.
LIEBOW, E. (1967) Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men. Boston: Little, Brown.
LINDESMITH, A. R. (1947) Opiate Addiction. New York: Principia.
RADCLIFFE-BROWN, A. R. (1937) "Social sanction," in E.R.A. Seligman (ed.) Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences 13. New York: Macmillan.
REICH, C. (1970) The Greening of America. New York: Random House.
ROBINSON, W. S. (1951) "The logical structure of analytic induction." Amer. Soc. Rev. 16: 812-818.
ROGERS, C. (1971) On Encounter Groups. New York: Harper & Row.

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016

ROZAK, T. (1969) The Making of a Counter-Culture. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.
SEELEY, J. (1963) "Sociology: some probative problems," in M. Stein and A. Vidich (eds.) Sociology on Trial. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
SLATER, P. (1970) The Pursuit of Loneliness. Boston: Beacon.
TURNER, R. H. (1962) "Role-taking: process versus conformity," in A. M. Rose (ed.) Human Behavior and Social Processes. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.
--- (1953) "The quest for universals in sociological research." Amer. Soc. Rev. 24: 605-611.
WIEDER, D. L. and D. H. ZIMMERMAN (forthcoming) "On explaining by rule: scientific and ethnoscientific sociology," in F. Sack, J. Schenkin, and E. Weingarten (eds.) Topics in Ethnomethodology.
--- (1974) "Generational experience and the development of freak culture." J. of Social Issues 30: 137-161.
YABLONSKY, L. (1965) The Tunnel Back: Synanon. New York: Macmillan.
YINGER, J. M. (1960) "Contraculture and subculture." Amer. Soc. Rev. 25: 625-635.
ZIMMERMAN, D. H. and D. L. WIEDER (forthcoming) "The diary–diary-interview method," in R. B. Smith (ed.) Social Science Methods 1.
--- (1975) "Marijuana smoking: the social organization of spontaneity." Presented at the annual meeting of the Pacific Sociological Association, Victoria, British Columbia.
--- (1972) "The use of diaries in subcultural research." Presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, New Orleans.
ZNANIECKI, F. (1934) The Method of Sociology. New York: Farrar & Rinehart.

*D. LAWRENCE WIEDER is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Oklahoma, Norman. His recent publications include* Language and Social Reality *(1974). He is currently investigating the prospects of using phenomenological methods for the clarification and further development of the foundations of the social sciences.*

*DON H. ZIMMERMAN is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His most recent publication (with Candace West), "Sex-Roles, Interruptions and Silences in Conversations," appeared in the 1975 volume,* Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance, *edited by B. Thorne and N. Henle.*

Downloaded from yas.sagepub.com at UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES on January 20, 2016