



Groove tube :
sixties television and the youth rebellion

Aniko Bodroghkozy.

GROOVE TUBE

Sixties Television and the Youth Rebellion
Tsiko Godoughkozy

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To my mother,

Christel Pick Bodroghkozy

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Acknowledgments

Real life is what happens while scholars are busy trying to write their books. The acknowledgments page is sometimes the only place where a book's reader can get some clues about the author, about how the book came into being, and about how the book's evolution and the author's life interconnect. A great number of major life events have gone on for this author in the close to five years it has taken for this project to evolve from a Ph.D. dissertation to the volume you hold in your hands. While working on this book, the author went from anxious academic job seeker in Madison, Wisconsin, to gypsy scholar in Montreal, to unemployed scholar in Toronto, to (finally!) employed assistant professor in Edmonton. With the vicissitudes of the academic job market of the early 1990s, sometimes the only thing that kept the author's self-confidence from utterly evaporating was her signed contract for this book. Other more positive life changes also punctuate the production of this book. The author went from being a single woman living alone to a married woman and from being religiously unaffiliated to a convert to Judaism. And perhaps most significant of all, as the author rushes this book into production, she awaits the imminent birth of her first child.

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Smother's Brothers exemplify the kind of invaluable receptiveness to scholarship about television and entertainment media that I wished other entertainment industry personnel shared.

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The pursuit of an academic career is a precarious endeavor at best, requiring great investments of time, money, energies, and hopes with uncertain rewards. My mother, to whom this book is dedicated, never wavered in her confidence that her daughter, the seemingly perpetual student, would make a success of this life of the mind. More recently my husband and partner, Elliot Majerczyk, has shown me that there is more to life than the world of the rational mind. He has cooked innumerable dinners while I was hammering away at this project. While I was immersed in 1960s television, Elliot, with his expertise in American popular music, gave me a deepened appreciation for sixties musical luminaries Bob Dylan and Brian Wilson. Okay, sweetheart, the book's done. Let's listen to *Pet Sounds* and give birth to this baby. . . .

Groove Tube

Introduction

Turning on

the Groove

Tube

In 1967 I was seven years old and enchanted by hippies. Living in a squeaky-clean Canadian suburb, I had never actually seen any real, live hippies — except on television. Yet those video images were powerful because I knew I wanted to be a hippie; I wanted to dress like them; I wanted to be around them. In the summer of that year, the so-called Summer of Love, when the hippie phenomenon burst like a psychedelic firecracker onto the North American mass media, I got my wish. Our family took a trip to Toronto, and, to satisfy my parents' curiosity and my own abiding fascination, we decided to drive through the city's much-publicized Yorkville district, a hippie haven that was Toronto's version of Haight-Ashbury. As our car inched along the congested main drag, my father demanded that we keep the windows rolled up. Outside our respectable Pontiac the sidewalks were jammed with the oddest and most bizarre examples of human wildlife my seven year old eyes had ever seen. The stoops and outdoor staircases of once-elegant houses were overrun with freakish-looking youths strumming guitars and bumming change. I remember seeing one young man sauntering down the street sporting a big, shaggy mane of red hair radiating in all directions, a fringed vest with no shirt underneath, and the biggest, craziest looped earring hanging from one ear.

I was terrified. Sliding down on the backseat, I was too distraught and afraid to look anymore. These frightening, filthy, bedraggled

specimens didn't look at all like *my* hippies. My hippies were cute and sweet and childlike. What I saw outside the car window were not flower children, certainly not the flower children I knew from television. I didn't know what they were, but I wanted nothing to do with them.

My traumatic introduction to the hippies of Yorkville did not, however, fundamentally challenge my childish fascination with the idea of hippies. On Halloween I would dress up in headband, flowers, and funny vest to go trick-or-treating as a flower child. I begged my parents to buy me a flowered miniskirt (which I got) and plastic white boots (which I didn't get) so I could enhance my hippie, go-go girl appearance. I asked my mother to part my hair in the middle rather than on the side so I would look more like hippie girls.

What image of hippies was I trying to emulate? With the hindsight of some thirty years I recognize that the only hippies I encountered on a regular basis came from our family's unreliable and often-on-the-blink Magnavox color television set. My hippies were tv hippies. Throughout the later 1960s they came to play with me from shows like *The Monkees*, *The Mod Squad*, *Laugh-In*, and *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*. In my tv-addicted suburban world these were the "real" hippies.

Television hippies gave me not only a way of dressing and parting my hair, however. They gave me a politics. A taken-for-granted anti-militarism and support of movements for social change have formed my core-belief structure for as long as I can remember. I did not come by these beliefs from my parents. My father, a fervent anticommunist, despised any form of social and political turmoil. For someone who had survived World War II, a Russian prisoner-of-war camp, and the dislocations of being a political refugee from communist Hungary, this may have been understandable. Our divergent "structures of feeling" began clashing heatedly and passionately in the early 1970s as I moved into rebellious adolescence—and yet another television show served as the terrain on which our differing beliefs battled. Arguing over the politics of *All in the Family*, my father and I played out our own painful generation gap. My mother, on the other hand, remained politically quiescent during the sixties. But when she separated from my father in the mid-1970s, she discovered the women's liberation movement. Among her favorite shows during this time were the feminist-inflected *Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *Maude*, and *Rhoda*.

This book grew from my desire to understand how prime-time television figured in the social and cultural dislocations provoked by the student and youth movements of the 1960s. Scholarly pursuits often have their basis in personal questions and autobiography, so part of my motivation here includes a desire to understand the extent to which my voluminous childhood television watching helped shape my political consciousness as a "child of the sixties." How did video representations of the youth counterculture and student rebellion allow space for me, from a very early age, to align myself with the values and politics of that oppositional movement?

Much commentary about prime-time television in the 1960s suggests that the turmoil and social dislocations of the period were absent from the "Vast Wasteland." Sixties tv ran amok with flying nuns, suburban housewife witches with twitchy noses, Okies in Beverly Hills, campy superheroes in tights and capes, and bumbling espionage agents talking into their shoes. As one broadcast historian has argued, sixties programming "meant offering evenings of avoidance. At a time of racial turmoil, political murders, and a massive military intervention in Southeast Asia, Americans viewed relentlessly escapist entertainment and rigorously 'neutral' news programming."¹ To some extent this is true. Network television was a conservative medium in the business of delivering the largest bulk audiences possible to corporate advertisers. Those bulk audiences comprised largely adult and older Americans generally unsympathetic to the political and cultural insurgencies of the nation's youth. Preadolescents and children like myself, too young to have formed political allegiances, made up the other major bloc of television watchers. The teens and young adults fomenting all that turmoil were often the least likely to be watching.

Nevertheless, the childhood memories that provided the impetus for this work, and the research that grounds it, suggest something more complicated. The products of the entertainment industry, in order to be popular, must engage at some level with the lived experiences of their audiences: they need to be relevant.² Popular relevancy proved tricky in the United States during the late sixties and early seventies, however. As this book argues, entertainment television could not, and did not, manage to ignore or repress the protest, rebellion, experimentation, and discord going on in the nation's streets and campuses. Prime-time programming grappled with and con-

fronted (often in highly mediated ways) many of the turbulent and painful phenomena of the period. Prime time explored the hippie scene and its attendant drug culture; numerous shows attempted to engage with the explosive issue of draft resistance; countless shows dealt with campus upheavals in one way or another, often featuring at least one almost ritualistic scene of demonstrators clashing violently with police. Later in the 1960s and into the early 1970s, prime-time dramas embraced particularly touchy issues such as fictionalized versions of the My Lai massacre, the Kent State University killings, and Weatherman-type urban guerrilla bombers. Other types of television programming such as variety shows and talk shows became the sites of on-air political confrontations.

This book will trace how the American media industry—specifically entertainment television—engaged with manifestations of youth rebellion and dissent. At the level of production, how did television networks, executives, and producers respond to the challenges associated with their strategies for representing aspects of a youth revolt that were just too colorful and too dramatic to ignore, despite attendant threats posed by an entertainment medium trucking with oppositional politics? At the textual level, what kinds of ideological negotiations can we uncover in the prime-time programming that resulted? How did this most culturally conservative of entertainment media, notorious for its “lowest common denominator,” “offend no one” approach to program creation, suddenly find itself turning the most incendiary political material into prime-time series fodder? At the level of reception, how did insurgent young people respond to the texts produced? As the first generation to grow up with the new medium, how did movement-affiliated youth make sense of their relationship to television? How did they respond to the programming that tried to portray their movement’s preoccupations? How did they respond to the culture industry disseminating that programming? Many disaffected baby boomers in the 1960s may have preferred just to ignore television’s attempts to depict their anti-establishment politics and activities, focusing their attention on the products of another arm of the culture industry, the rock music business.³ However, evidence from the pages of the movement’s underground press suggests a spirited and active process by some in the countercultural and radical student enclaves in struggling over the mechanisms of mass-media incorporation. Engagement with popu-

lar media texts—frequently in an antagonistic way—assisted some sixties rebels in thinking through their movement’s fractious relationship to the dominant order and helped them to understand the workings of that order. And although politicized sixties youth were overwhelmingly hostile to the television industry, the industry did not, necessarily, return that antagonism. In its attempts to lure baby boomers back to a medium that had significantly shaped their childhoods, prime time attempted to turn itself into a “groove tube,” incorporating significant amounts of (admittedly simplified and sanitized) countercultural and campus politico values and critiques. The procedure proved anything but smooth for the networks or their audiences. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, prime time turned into an arena of culture clash, political controversy, generational battle, and ideological upheaval as did so many American institutions during that tumultuous era.

Making Sense of “the Sixties”

Writing about America in the 1960s is nothing if not complicated. For instance, when we refer to “sixties youth” or “rebellious, disaffected, insurgent young people” or simply “the movement,” what are we actually talking about? Certainly not all those who were in their teens and early twenties in the mid to later 1960s participated in the activities, politics, and lifestyles discussed here. The category of “sixties youth” is often taken for granted as commonsensical, obvious, and not requiring definition. We all, supposedly, know who and what we’re talking about. Things aren’t that simple, however. We need to map out a working definition of the social/historical category of “rebellious youth of the 1960s.”

Demographics provide one way to help define this phenomenon. In the immediate aftermath of World War II the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand experienced a sharp and prolonged rise in fertility rates that only began to drop off by the mid-1960s. European countries, on the other hand, went through a birthing boom of only a few years immediately after the Second World War.⁴ Thus, the baby boom was largely a North American phenomenon. “Baby boomers” formed a huge demographic mass and have often been defined precisely by their size. By their sheer numbers

they have tended to shape and influence the social concerns dominant in society depending on their age at the moment. In the 1950s, when the first wave of the “boom” generation were children, concerns about family and child rearing were central issues within North American social, cultural, and political arenas. The 1960s, a period obsessed with youth, was literally awash with young people. Between 1960 and 1970 the population between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four increased by a spectacular and unprecedented 53 percent. Never had so much of the population been at the turbulent years of youth all at the same time. Historian of the baby boom generation Landon Y. Jones observes, “It is no coincidence, then, that the six years from 1964 to 1970 saw the outbreak of the most prolonged and dislocating domestic turmoil of this century. These were the same years that the first baby boomers massively entered the dangerous years.” Jones presents the work of Norman Ryder, a pioneer of cohort theory in the field of demography, who argued that “throughout history the younger generation has challenged the older as it enters this life stage. The young are cultural insurrectionaries, *agents provocateurs* with no allegiance to the past. The task of the older generation is to control this ‘invasion of barbarians’ and shape their energies so they become contributors to society. Only then, by recruiting the young, can the culture maintain its continuity.”⁵ Jones goes on to argue that the vast numbers of young baby boomers overwhelmed their elders and made this process of social recruitment and continuity impossible.

This demographic definition of sixties youth has a certain explanatory power. Unfortunately it cannot account for the massive student and youth movements in countries that did not experience fertility booms. In France the youth rebellion of 1968 in alliance with French workers came very close to toppling the de Gaulle government and sparking a potential political revolution. The late sixties saw youth movements around the globe—in Japan, Mexico, Germany, and other nations.⁶ On the other hand, the baby boom nation Australia was relatively quiescent during the sixties, experiencing few campus disruptions compared to the thousands on U.S. campuses.⁷ Therefore, although an appeal to numbers and demographic determinism can help in defining rebellious sixties youth in the United States, it tends toward essentialism and must be used cautiously.

A baby boom definition is also problematic because not every per-

son born during its first wave (generally considered to be between 1946 and the mid-1950s) actively engaged in campus politics (such as antiwar activity, draft resistance, or challenges to in loco parentis rules) or got involved with countercultural activities (psychedelic drug experimentation, dropping out, alternative lifestyles, acid-rock music fandom). The popular imagination tends to perceive baby boomers as generally white and middle class. Although working-class and African American couples participated in the fertility frenzy as much as did the white middle class, the first two groups tend to get erased from the picture. The working classes are often not seen as “a part of the sixties” at all except as adult reactionary hard hats responding violently and in disgust to the unpatriotic antics of the pampered and privileged children of the suburbs. Working-class baby boomers are practically nonexistent in the popular memory of the period. Typically this was not a cohort that went to university or participated in counterculture communities. Many boomer sons of the working class went to Vietnam, fought there, and died there. In the popular imagination, however, it is the disruptive activity of their luckier stateside brothers and sisters that defines “sixties youth.”

John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson, and Brian Roberts have delineated in their work on youth culture the differences between working-class subcultures and middle-class countercultures. Although their work focuses on the British context of youth activity, their observations make sense of the U.S. scene as well. In comparing the two groups, they observe that working-class subcultures tend to operate as a form of “gang,” whereas middle-class countercultures are more diffuse, individualized “milieus” rather than the tightly knit leader-oriented subcultural group:

Working-class sub-cultures reproduce a clear dichotomy between those aspects of group life still fully under the constraint of dominant or ‘parent’ institutions (family, home, school, work), and those focused on non-work hours—leisure, peer-group associations. Middle-class counter-culture milieux merge and blur distinctions between ‘necessary’ and ‘free’ time and activities. Indeed, the latter are distinguished precisely by their attempt to explore ‘alternative institutions’ to the central institutions of the dominant culture. . . . During the high point of the Counter-Culture, in the 1960s, the middle-class counter-culture formed a whole embryo ‘alternative society’,

providing the Counter-Culture with an underground, institutional base. Here, the youth of each class reproduces the position of the 'parent' classes to which they belong. Middle-class culture affords the space and opportunity for sections of it to 'drop out' of circulation. Working-class youth is persistently and constantly structured by the dominating rhythm of Saturday Night and Monday Morning.⁸

Because class is so much more hidden in the United States, subcultural youth activity may be more difficult to "see" than it is in Britain. But the structural differences set out by Clarke et al. are useful in defining aspects of a counterculture (which in this instance would include more directly political and insurgent youth groupings that often are separated off and distinguished from definitions of "the counterculture"). The point is that this is fundamentally a middle-class form of rebellion. Consequently, our definition of "sixties youth" must be limited by class.

It must also be limited by race. African American youth were highly politicized and insurgent in this period and, unlike working-class whites, were, to some extent, aligned with radicalized young middle-class whites. The civil rights and black-power movements had enormous influence on the evolving character of campus-based white youth insurgency. But although most campus politicians drew inspiration from the black movement and fought for the causes of racial equality and black empowerment, the segregationist structures so deeply embedded in American society manifested themselves here as well. The hugely influential New Left Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) had very few black members. In 1965 the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the major student civil rights organization, asked all its white members to leave the organization.⁹ Although blacks participated in antiwar activism (with Martin Luther King Jr. coming out strongly against the war in 1967), they tended to organize separately from campus-based student groups. In relation to the hippie-oriented counterculture, many of the distinctions Clarke et al. laid out for working-class subcultures could be applied to African American youth groupings as well. But unlike working-class youth subcultures, black youths were highly politicized and dangerously insurgent. Clearly these attributes attracted many middle-class white youths to the phenomenon of black uprisings and dissent. Ultimately, however, these were two different

and separate movements. This book focuses primarily on the white, middle-class youth rebellion.

Even among white middle-class baby boomers of the period, we have to limit our field of vision. Those who participated in demonstrations and alternative lifestyles always formed a minority. However, at the time and since, this colorful lot has come to stand in for the larger category of "the youth of the sixties." This portion of the baby boom formed the leading edge for the generation—its avant-garde. And it was this segment of the baby boom that proved so fascinating to the culture industries. Television, music, cinema, even advertising showed little interest in exploring the lifestyles, values, and politics associated with the "silent generation" of baby boomer youth who remained on the sidelines or on the opposite side of all the social, political, and cultural ferment precipitated by their more vocal cogenerationists.¹⁰ The silent generation of boomers was, at best, a rhetorical ploy for conservatives and Republicans to use as contrast to the long haired, draft-dodging, pothead freaks. Conformist sixties youth were too dull and colorless for the popular culture arena.

We also need a working definition of "the youth rebellions of the 1960s." Most historians and commentators of the period agree that the white, middle-class youth movement consisted of two distinct but inexorably related components: a politicized, university-based mobilization often called the New Left or "the movement," of which SDS was a key element; and a more diffuse, less overtly "political" phenomenon of drug-oriented, alternative, antimaterialist, community living called the counterculture. Young people at the time tended to see the two phenomena as separate. Campus politicians despaired of the "do your own thing" hippies, who eschewed engagement and struggle with established power structures, whereas the hippies tended to criticize student activists for not dropping out to engage in the only fundamental change possible: psychic transformation. The underground press, a crucial alternative institution that allowed the decentralized and often amorphous youth movement a sense of coherence, consisted mostly of papers that spoke to one or the other tendency within youth circles. Hippie-oriented papers tended to feature stories on hallucinogenic substances, spiritual matters, and rock music. Politico-oriented papers tended to feature coverage of demonstrations, establishment repression, political theorizing, and rock music. However, these delineations are rather arbitrary

and do not properly suggest the merging between these two tendencies. Activist students embraced many of the aspects of counter-cultural "lifestyle politics," such as drug use, engagement with the burgeoning youth music scene, and experimentation with different modes of living. Hippies, especially after becoming recipients of law-and-order disciplining, tended to move into more confrontational directions. So, although I think it important to distinguish between these two modes of youth rebelliousness in the 1960s, I think it is equally important to emphasize their common roots.

Making Sense of Sixties Youth Audiences

One of the key issues this book explores is audience reception practices. I want to reconstruct how countercultural and radical sixties youth struggled with, and attended to, their popular cultural representations in prime-time television. How does one go about doing that kind of historical reconstruction? One can, of course, interview numerous baby boomers, but I am wary of problems associated with the kinds of memory texts oral history would produce in this instance. Until very recently most attempts at "making sense of the sixties" have been initiated by individuals who participated in the period, often as active participants in the social movements that so defined the era. The memoirs and participant-observer histories that have appeared with great frequency since the mid-1980s are of enormous use, but almost inevitably the authors still have axes to grind, personal demons to exorcise, and unresolved battles to wage.¹¹ The era is still very much a contested terrain for boomers who, not surprisingly, will remember their youthful past in ways that help to make sense of who and where they are now. Oral histories are a less crucial resource for historians when other documents are available. One of my main resources for reconstructing the discourses circulating within youth movement circles about mass-media representations of youth dissent comes from evidence culled from the underground press.

Beginning in the mid-1960s a growing plethora of alternative newspapers, run on shoestring budgets with nonprofessional writers, began appearing in major cities and college towns. They were hawked on the streets of youth ghettos and on university campuses to readers

primarily in their teens and twenties. As what came to be called "the movement" assumed the characteristics of a provisionally coherent political conglomeration of disaffected young people, papers that spoke to and for that youth movement became a crucial information, communication, and community-building forum. By 1969 over five hundred underground papers had sprung up throughout the country, distributing anywhere from 2 million to 4.5 million copies to "radicals, hippies, racial minorities, soldiers, and curiosity-seekers."¹² The *Los Angeles Free Press*, one of the first and most widely circulated of these papers, reached a readership of almost one hundred thousand. The counterculture-oriented *East Village Other* and *Chicago Seed* reached sixty-five thousand and twenty-three thousand respectively. Although some of that readership comprised adults "slumming" safely in hippie and radical student spaces or lascivious types drawn to the *Free Press* and other papers' notorious sex ads, the vast majority of readers were aligned with the movement. Their reading of the underground press provided one way to indicate that association.

Those who wrote for the underground newspapers saw themselves not as observers of youth activism and lifestyles but as participants. David Armstrong observes in *A Trumpet to Arms: Alternative Media in America* that "Berkeley Barb founder Max Scherr saw the Barb as a propaganda vehicle and organizing tool fully as much as he did a newspaper of record. . . . The Barb covered most of the happenings of the middle and last sixties from the instigators' points of view."¹³ Journalistic notions of objectivity, distance, balance, and the like had no place in underground press articles, which were advocacy to the extreme and often not overtly concerned with accuracy of detail.

The underground press is a particularly rich source of historical material precisely because its writers were members of the very community they covered. The voices that speak from these documents, although not unmediated reflections of readers' perspectives and experiences, serve as compelling historical documents. Like any other kind of popular press, the underground papers performed an "agenda setting" role. Issues raised in the underground press most likely resonated in some fashion among those in the youth community who did not write about their perspectives. If numerous underground press articles made causal connections between television as a medium and the rebelliousness of young people and used the theories of Mar-

shall McLuhan to explain why, then we can assume that these ideas had some currency at the time and must have circulated beyond the articles themselves. If underground papers like the *Free Press*, the *Seed*, and the *East Village Other* came to the defense of the embattled and summarily canceled Smothers Brothers variety show with petitions and letter writing campaigns, we can assume that the show was of some cultural importance to significant numbers of movement youth.

How can we make use of the kind of knowledge provided by these sources? Television historian Lynn Spigel has studied popular women's magazines and the clues provided by their articles and advertisements about the introduction of television into postwar suburban homes. She shows how these magazines engaged their readers in a frequently conflicted dialogue about the meanings of this new technology. Advertisements had to try to adopt the point of view of the potential consumer and thus can offer clues to the fears and hopes about the new medium. The knowledge provided by such documents is partial and mediated because we have no access to the everyday lives of the women who grappled with the social and familial changes wrought by television.¹⁴

The documents I use bear a closer relationship to their potential readership. If the underground press endorsed readers' points of view, it was not because the papers were trying to sell a product (beyond the paper itself) but because the generators of these documents did, in fact, share that viewpoint. However, underground press articles display frequently conflicted responses to questions of media co-optation. By reading underground newspapers we can see how discordant and diverse movement responses to the medium could be. There was nothing monolithic or singular about the points of view offered—even within the pages of one paper. Thus an exploration of the conflicts, anxieties, and contestations that went on within the papers themselves suggests that these issues seized the energies of radical and countercultural young people at some level.

Although these documents provide partial and always mediated access to a larger totality to which we have, finally, no real access, there remain fundamental gaps and silenced voices that reverberate in their muteness. Certain viewpoints do not speak from the pages of the underground press. The voices of women within insurgent youth groups are marginalized, if not totally absent, in the pages

of the underground press, as they were to a large extent within the movement itself.¹⁵ The majority of writers for the underground press were young, middle-class, white males. Male perspectives prevailed in a movement that frequently made sense of its rebelliousness as a means to assert *manhood*. Macho posturing and appeals to physically aggressive acts in order to signal militancy became more prevalent in youth activism as it entered its more confrontational and revolutionary phases in the later 1960s. Although women participated in insurgent youth politics and in countercultural communities in equal numbers to men, the language of the papers frequently evacuated the presence of women. The papers' layout and visuals also tended to marginalize, demean, and silence women. Many papers were littered with images of naked, sexualized young nymphs—"hippie chick" types who represented a fantasy of feminine sexual availability in these new "liberated," "permissive," and "open" times. These images often graced the covers of underground papers to boost circulation. The *East Village Other* regularly ran its own version of a "page three girl" called "Slum Goddess." Each week the paper would feature a photo of a young woman from the neighborhood—frequently only semi-clad. The very popular underground comix served up in the papers were notoriously misogynistic in their depictions of female bodies. R. Crumb's renderings of hypersexualized nubile nymphs particularly offended early women's liberationists. Many papers also featured pages of ads for porno films advertised with masturbatory representations of buxom and beckoning feminine flesh. When women writers, in the wake of the emergent women's liberation movement, began insisting on coverage of feminist issues, male editors found ways to ridicule content they couldn't censor. An article in the *Barb* about Berkeley women who were organizing carried the headline "The Women Are Revolting." A feminist manifesto on the politics of female orgasm in the *Rat* bore the title, "Clit Flit Big Hit."¹⁶ Although these "politico"-oriented papers could not entirely overlook the uprising in feminist politics among movement women, the more countercultural papers did their best to ignore the whole thing. The *East Village Other* showcased a scathing denunciation of women's liberation positions penned by one of its few female writers, Renfreu Neff.

Because the underground papers largely obliterate the voices of women and make little acknowledgment of their gendered experi-

ences and meaning-making endeavors, there is the threat that the historical narrative I construct will perpetuate that obliteration. In order to avoid such further silencing, this book interrogates questions of female representation in the mass culture texts discussed in the chapters that follow. For instance, I examine how young women were depicted in ways that defused the "threat" of youth rebellion. I explore how they functioned as "mediating" figures between archetypically male rebels and male establishment figures. However, this textual analysis cannot suggest how countercultural and New Left women may have read these texts. The silences in the underground press documents make it next to impossible to reconstruct how young women may have engaged with these mass-mediated constructions of themselves.

Making Sense of Theory and Method

In an article that has proven enormously influential on my thinking about this project, Stuart Hall argues for the need to situate popular culture within a historical process of social transformations.¹⁷ Audiences for mass-produced popular culture are not passive and inert vessels that function merely to be filled with dominant, capitalist ideology inevitably encoded in such texts. Neither are these texts the straightforward property of dominant groups or classes. What we see in mass-produced popular texts, according to Hall, is a "double movement of containment and resistance."¹⁸ Although the culture industries that produce these products have the power to "rework and reshape what they represent; and, by repetition and selection, to impose and implant such definitions of ourselves as fit more easily the description of the dominant or preferred culture," this power can be resisted, refused, and negotiated.¹⁹ Popular culture can, therefore, function as an important site where cultural hegemony is fought for, won, rewon, and occasionally threatened. Todd Gitlin, writing about entertainment television, has argued that "major social conflicts are transported *into* the cultural system, where the hegemonic process frames them, form and content both, into compatibility with dominant systems of meanings. Alternative material is routinely *incorporated*: brought into the body of cultural production."²⁰ Although I argue with the smooth-running characterization of Gitlin's model—

one that leaves no room for hegemonic crisis or the *resistance* half of Hall's model—I do agree with his argument that social conflicts are brought into the sphere of popular entertainment.²¹ With increasing urgency throughout the late sixties and early seventies, weekly television programs and other popular-culture sites worked on the conflicts and disturbances associated with youth rebellion. By charting a process of "incorporation," I want to explore, by looking at these texts, how that process worked. I also want to determine whether, in fact, the threatening character of this rebellion could be made to conform easily with "dominant systems of meaning." By tracing changing representations of youth disaffection and protest over a five-year period, roughly 1966 to 1971, I argue that these television programs are clues pointing to some important shifts in hegemony at the level of the social and cultural. These texts, therefore, serve as a kind of historical evidence, suggesting something about changing "structures of feeling," to use Raymond Williams's term for a culture's sense of life, its patterned way of thinking and feeling that can be located at the level of lived experience. Williams argues that we tend to notice changes in structures of feeling by the contrasts between generations:

One generation may train its successor, with reasonable success, in the social character or the general cultural pattern, but the new generation will have its own structure of feeling, which will not appear to have come "from" anywhere. For here, most distinctly, the changing organization is enacted in the organism: the new generation responds in its own ways to the unique world it is inheriting, taking up many continuities, that can be traced, and reproducing many aspects of the organization, which can be separately described, yet feeling its whole life in certain ways differently, and shaping its creative response into a new structure of feeling.²²

Although the elder generation did not smoothly train sixties youth "with reasonable success" to assume a pattern of social life already established, Williams's model can help describe a subtle process of social and cultural change. He argues that it is in "documentary culture" that we can most clearly get a sense of a previous culture's structure of feeling. Television, which is embedded in the everyday experiences of people within modern technological societies, is therefore a particularly useful place to trace this kind of change. These texts form a site for showcasing transformations as the structures of feeling as-

sociated with a new generation begin to be felt within the popular culture.

This study also benefits from Antonio Gramsci's theories about hegemony, particularly his argument that in order to maintain consent, hegemonic forces must, to some extent, accommodate and accede to positions associated with various subordinated formations whose consent is desired. Thus part of the hegemonic impulse is the perpetual attempt to incorporate positions, discourses, and practices that, although not necessarily in the interests of the socially and politically dominant, do not threaten their leadership positions.²³

Particularly useful to me is Gramsci's idea of a "crisis of authority." During such a crisis the ruling elites are no longer able to naturalize their power, no longer able to lead. In effect they can only dominate, using coercive means rather than consensual methods attributable to a smoothly functioning hegemonic order. Subordinated groups no longer participate in validating the ruling classes in their positions as rulers. Dominant ideology is no longer accepted common sense. According to Gramsci, "the crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born."²⁴ Nothing could describe what happened in the United States in the 1960s better than this. With increasing militancy as the decade progressed, young whites (both on campuses and in countercultural communities), young African Americans (both in ghettos and on campuses), women, Latinos, gays and lesbians formed insurgency movements that struck at the heart of the dominant social and political order—"the establishment"—questioning its legitimacy and revealing as myth many previously held tenets of what "America" was all about. The social order in the United States appeared to be unraveling, coming apart at the ideological seams. We can see examples of this in the steady dismantlement of prowar sentiment in the Lyndon Johnson White House or later in the increasingly antagonistic relationship between the Nixon White House and the mass media. Hegemonic forces in the political sphere no longer successfully asserted common cause with the cultural sphere. Universities as the intellectual sphere were in such disarray that they found themselves incapable of performing their ideological chores. Increasingly—as we will see especially in chapters 3 and 4—consensual strategies gave way to coercive tactics of a hegemonic system in peril. Television was intricately bound up in all this chaos. The crisis of hegemonic authority and legitimacy that wreaked

havoc through the universities, the ghettos, the military complex, and the political process also manifested itself within the popular-culture industry. If, as cultural studies scholars argue, popular culture is one of the key ideological sites where hegemony is negotiated, then during a crisis of authority television can provide a showcase of ideological breakdown and reconfiguration. By examining television during this period—as an institution, a body of texts, and a group of audiences—we can also explore the extent to which the hegemonic process, in attempting to reassert a new form of cultural leadership, needed to acquiesce to the discourses of the dissenting subordinate. How did popular television figure into the overall turmoil of the period? What was its role in hegemonic breakdown and in hegemonic reframing?²⁵

Chapter 1 looks at the introduction of television into suburban homes at the very moment that the baby boom was demographically exploding. How did this relationship influence the ways sixties young people made sense of themselves as "the television generation"? The chapter considers the various ways these young people made sense of their alienation and rebellion by their suggestion that television had turned them into freaks. We look at how the theories of Marshall McLuhan were mobilized by young people in empowering ways to make sense of the generation gap. The chapter also discusses the various dissident uses of televisual technology—from trip toys to guerrilla television.

Chapter 2 examines the representation of hippies on prime-time television, charting the strategies used by the medium to "domesticate" the phenomenon after an initial period of television hippie hysteria. One particular strategy we will explore involves "feminizing" the counterculture in the figure of the "hippie chick." We will also look at how writers for the underground press reacted to these portrayals and how countercultural communities responded to the media spotlight that so intensely shone on them.

Chapter 3 looks at the most media-obsessed and teleliterate group within the burgeoning movement: the Yippies. The chapter analyzes how the Yippies believed they could actually organize disaffected youth through manipulating the media. We will also look at how contentious the Yippies' media tactics were within the movement. The chapter focuses particular attention on the televising of the Chicago Democratic Convention riots and how Yippies, network newscasters, Chicago's mayor, and movement youth struggled over

the meanings of that all-too-public moment of crisis and disarray. We will then look at how some activists saw television talk shows as a potential site to further manipulate the media and televise the struggle.

Chapter 4 documents the rise and fall of the only prime-time series to garner demonstrable youth movement support, *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*. We will look at how the folksinger-comedian brothers began aligning themselves and their show more and more with antiwar and counterculture politics and how the threat this posed to network television led CBS to censor and then finally pull the show off the air. Like the televising of the Chicago Democratic Convention *mêlée*, we will examine how the confrontations around the Smothers Brothers show served as another venue for the playing out of an accelerating crisis of authority. The chapter examines the significant amount of attention the Smothers Brothers received in youth movement circles, the support, as well as suspicions, their case engendered.

Chapter 5 looks at another significant prime-time attempt to garner a countercultural youth audience and to appeal to youth politics—*The Mod Squad*. We look at the contentious development and production of the series and the suspicion, outrage, and, at times, grudging support the show generated in movement circles. As network television's initial attempt to do "socially relevant" dramatic programming by incorporating aspects of rebellious youth discourse, the series was part of an ideological process of negotiation. We will also look at the ways in which highly contentious and explosive issues like draft resistance and the My Lai massacre got massaged and mediated in fictionalized form in particular episodes of *The Mod Squad*. What can we say about the cultural politics of such mediations? Are they "victories" of a sort for the movement?

Chapter 6 examines the so-called Season of Social Relevance, the 1970/71 broadcast year, when all three broadcast networks tried to lure young, politicized viewers in an attempt to reconfigure the demographics of the viewing audience. We look at how the networks, working with *The Mod Squad* formula, performed acts of ideological negotiation by incorporating even more dissident youth discourse into entertainment programming. The chapter examines how and why "social relevance" appeared to fail and how it ultimately succeeded wildly when applied to the sitcom genre.

Chapter 7 considers the legacy of "social relevance" and the lasting impact that the sixties youth movement has had on American prime-time television. Has entertainment television lurched to the left? Have the social-change values of the 1960s become entrenched in popular entertainment, as many conservative critics have charged? In the 1980s and 1990s, how did prime time negotiate with the specter of the 1960s?

Because the chapters are not rigorously chronological and because not all readers will be equally familiar with the trajectory of events of the sixties, I have put together a narrative chronology of the years 1966 to 1971, the period under consideration in this book. I have also included in the chronology the airdates for most of the television shows discussed in these pages so that the reader can contextualize these examples of televisual culture with the social and political phenomena they were mediating.

So, without further ado, let us now turn on and tune in to the "Groove Tube."