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The Reluctant Hipster: A Subculture Striving for Self Identity in a Changing World

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The Reluctant Hipster:
A Subculture Striving for Self Identity in a Changing World

A Thesis
Submitted In Partial Fulfillment Of the Requirement
For The Degree of Masters of Arts
University of Southern Maine
American and New England Studies

by

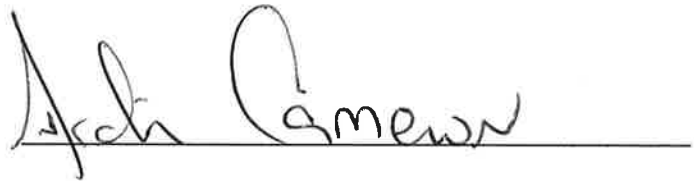
David Jester

2015

Final Approval Form
The University of Southern Maine
American And New England Studies

July, 2nd, 2015

We hereby recommend that the thesis of David Jester
entitled "The Reluctant Hipster"
be accepted in partial fulfillment to of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ardis Cameron", written over a horizontal line.

Ardis Cameron, Advisor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Edney", written over a horizontal line.

Matthew Edney, Reader

Accepted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Manuel Avalos", written over a horizontal line.

Manuel Avalos, Ph. D., Dean, College of Arts. Humanities and Social Sciences

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Preface

When I visited Portland, Oregon in May of 2009, I had never heard of the modern hipster. Other than beatniks wearing black turtlenecks, featured in black and white avant-garde films—which were post-modernist renditions of plays such as *Oedipus Rex*—or portrayed in popular films as the bebop jazz musician, the rebel against society, the intellectual who cares more about philosophy than the world stage, I had no reference for this title “hipster.” My friend Emily told me over the phone, only days before I would descend upon the tarmac at Portland International Airport, that the city had become a hipster mecca. To clarify my confusion, I asked, ‘what is a hipster?’ I received only descriptions, identifiers of outward appearance, which did not help clarify a movement or a subculture, but instead, described how they looked, or how they represented themselves in self-display. In Oregon I learned much, but returned to Portland, Maine, puzzled by the hipster.

The following is an analysis of the hipster subculture. Using Portland, Maine as my geographical location of research, and Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York—which have both been deemed hipster locales—I have sought to show that hipsters are a subculture, and as such, have direct and indirect impacts upon the communities in which they inhabit. Difficulties have presented themselves while researching this subculture, and as a result, my thesis and understanding of this subculture have evolved from early questions, finding further complicated quandaries to answer. With an open

mind, and a willingness to understand that groups view the world through differing lenses, this thesis has matured into the work that follows.

My research method was simple, yet difficult to apply, due to the ideological views of hipsters—being that they do not view themselves as being hipster, which poses somewhat of a conundrum for the researcher. I overcame this by discussing with informants their opinions on the term hipster, and analyzing journal articles which argue that the term hipster is a made up moniker perpetuated by the media for consumer culture. This is discussed and analyzed along side the many other media, academic journal, and newspaper articles which argue otherwise. Philosophical theory and anthropological discourse on subcultures is explored as well, so to gain a deeper understanding into what it is we hope to glean from this study. Furthermore, I hope to identify the hipster subculture, while utilizing the paradigm of post-structural theory, which argues that no person can neatly fit into a category with others, that our intentions are our own, and we have separate and sometime differing motives, surrounding the choices we make.

A plethora of information on hipsters exists on the internet through blog posts, websites, newspapers, and magazines articles, but many of these follow a trend of hipster-loathing. This phenomenon of anger towards hipster will be discussed and analyzed utilizing the many websites, books, and articles containing rants of anger toward this subculture. Academic articles and books from the likes of Sharon Zukin and Richard Lloyd gave information on the geographic areas and traits of hipsters. It wasn't only with these two authors that we find knowledge on this topic, but self-published

authors such as Mark Greif and Sophy Bot have taken to the streets to analyze this topic and independently publish their observations on this subculture.

Most importantly to any research is primary source. In my search for the hipster subculture I have interviewed many people and in doing so, found an audience that was excited to speak on this topic whether they believe it exists or not.

Abstract

What is the Hipster subculture? This is a question that has plagued me for some time. I sit in a bar and hear patrons discuss hipster's with disdain, while at other bars I notice a comfortable hipster atmosphere, but still, the question lingers in my mind, what is Hipster? I recognize those categorized as hipster identify fashion trends which are attributed to hipster's, and even discern bars, restaurants, and businesses which cater to the Hipster demographic, but still, what does all this mean? What is hipster subculture, and how does it interact with the community?

In 2013 *Travel + Leisure Magazine* ran an article titled, "America's Best Cities for hipsters," and ranked Portland, Maine number nine amongst a whole host of cities. The small blurb, which accompanies a picture of Munjoy Hill, bordered by Casco Bay in the lower portion of the image, describes consumer attributes attached to the hipster subculture. The blurb notes Portland "still excels in such hipster essentials as good java (like Bard Coffee, off Congress Street), and residents clearly know how to pull off the fisherman look...", and mentions the city as "flannel-shirted." So what is it that makes a city Hipster, is it all just fashion and consumption?¹

A multitude of articles can be found on hipsters and the consumption of Pabst Blue Ribbon (PBR) beer. Hipster and PBR, as it is known in the argot of millennial's, tends to be synonymous with one another. Among many articles, discussing an affinity

¹ Katrina Brown Hunt, "America's Best Cities for Hipsters," *Travel + Leisure Magazine*, November 2013. <http://www.travelandleisure.com/articles/americas-best-cities-for-hipsters-2013/10>

for PBR by the hipster subculture, *The New York Times* article titled “The Marketing of No Marketing,” discussed PBR’s resurgence in the United States, citing little effort of marketing on the part of Pabst Blue Ribbon. As the author Rob Walker notes, “It is endorsed in ‘The Hipster Handbook,’ a paperback dissection of cool, and is popping up in trendy bars from the Mission District to the Lower East Side.” The locations mentioned in this article are enclaves of hipster subculture. But how can a beer account for identity within a subculture?²

Pabst Blue Ribbon, flannel-shirts, coffee, these are identifiers within a subculture. Anthropologist Roberta Edwards Lenkeit, in defining subcultures, notes that those belonging to a subculture “share behaviors, values, attitudes, and artifacts among the members.” Fashion beer, restaurants, coffee, bars, these are all artifacts, and even reflect behaviors of the hipster subculture, but do not explain or elucidate shared values and attitudes of hipster subculture. These shared values and attitudes might be explained by examining the cities which hipster’s have chosen to gather in, and also by direct conversations with those steeped within the subculture.³

Identifying a subculture, and understanding their motives, can best be accomplished by ethnographic research. I plan to conduct interviews with business owners in Portland, Maine, whose businesses are considered to cater to the hipster subculture. Interviews will also be conducted with those considered to be hipster. This

² Rob Walker, “The Marketing of No Marketing,” *The New York Times*, June 22, 2003.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/22/magazine/the-marketing-of-no-marketing.html>

³ Roberta Edwards Lenkeit, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2009), 38.

paper will be the introductory chapter to my thesis, and will analyze and explain hipster subculture, and their relationship to Portland, Maine. As a parallel and reference I will utilize interviews, observations, and articles on the hipster subculture of the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York. These comparisons will show that this is not an isolated micro culture unique to Portland, Maine, but a widespread subculture entrenched in many cities throughout the United States.

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Introduction

The hipster is a modern day subculture which has found itself entrenched in many cities throughout the world. Hipsters, can, and do, live outside cities, but the concentration of this subculture is found within urban neighborhoods. The word hipster has been attached to a group of people since the 1950s, associated with beatniks who inhabited Greenwich Village, New York, and today it is a name given to a subculture which is widespread and pervasive throughout the world. Searching the word hipster on the internet, can find an overabundance of magazine articles from New York to Portland, Oregon, Australia to South Africa, Great Britain to South America. These articles vary in the degree on which they discuss this topic, and the differing subjects attached to these articles is staggering. A multitude of articles on hipsters, discuss their consumption practices in relation to Pabst Blue Ribbon, while other articles speak about hipster's with a loathing and hatred reserved for white supremacists. So, what is a hipster?

The hipster subculture is a group of individuals who are moving in opposition to consumerism, capitalism, and globalization. This subculture moves independently, as a group of bohemian's who entrench themselves in postindustrial communities, all the while breathing life back into these neighborhoods, and destroying their own boundaries on art and philosophy. Much like their 1950s counterparts, they are working in opposition to mainstream culture, and it is through their actions that they perform cultural dissent. Media articles portray hipsters as nothing more than consumers who are the epicenter of

cool, and the leaders of gentrification, but the ideals of hipsters prove otherwise, and as such, their consumer practices have purpose and meaning.

The following pages of this thesis will argue that the hipster subculture exists, and is not an invention of mainstream media. Three discussions will occur in the following pages, all interconnected to the hipster. First, the hipster subculture will be analyzed and discussed, showing a movement of ideals in opposition to mass consumerism, capitalism and a loss of community through globalization. After this is accomplished, the argument of the hipster as a media invention will be discussed, and the argument for subcultural group will be pursued further. The last component of this discussion will illuminate the connection between the hipster subculture and the gentrification of hipster neighborhoods, which, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York, and Portland, Maine are used to discuss this inevitability. Sociologist Sharon Zukin's idea of "new retail entrepreneurs" as "social" entrepreneurs, will be discussed in relationship to the hipster subculture and the created landscape of the neighborhoods they inhabit, and how this may contribute to gentrification.

Chapter One

The Hipster Subculture

You know you're in hipster Brooklyn when someone who looks like a 19th-century farmer tells you that his line of work is "affinity marketing"...O, Bohemia! There are several ways to react to a culture quake. You can meet it with befuddlement, perhaps wondering how flappers handled the thorny intersections between dancing in fountains and limited dry cleaning.

"How I Became a Hipster," The New York Times, Henry Alford

What is Subculture?

Subculture is a word that has permeated into American vernacular, and has been corrupted in a way like the word post-modern, which has entered everyday vocabulary as an adjective, distorted from its original definition and cultural meaning. Often used to describe a group of people that have similar outward identifiers, subculture has been stripped down to a definition with two-dimensional edges. Stereotypes are often utilized to describe a group, in which all traits are then jumbled together and a grand assumption made, that all those who share similar traits prescribe to a similar ideology. The word subculture and how it is used to describe a group is not as simple as that, and the philosophy behind this idea is multifaceted.

As Dan Laughey asks the question, “What is a subculture?” the reader is left with a simple, vague, and ambiguous answer, “there is no simple, catch-all definition.”¹ Laughey, in his book *Music and Youth Culture*, seeks the answer to this question, analyzing a timeline of paradigmatic shifts in cultural theory related to the studies of subculture. Early subcultural theory derives itself from the Chicago School of thought, of which the theoretical framework was predominantly sociology and criminology. This theory of subculture began forming in the 1930s and 40s in the United States, while simultaneously occurring in Britain, deriving from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. The Chicago School was unique from the British School in that, “subculture was conceived to be a phenomenon to which every individual in any everyday context potentially could belong.”² Researchers adhering to this philosophy of thought, found that subcultural groups overlapped and interacted with each other, instead of imposing isolation amongst their groups. As the twentieth century progressed, the structuralist paradigm was replaced by post-modernist critique of subcultural analysis, and as a result, social scientists began viewing groups as a collection of individuals who held cohesive ideologies, rather than structured organizational units, where semiotics and homology were key in the analysis of these groups.

¹ Dan Laughey, *Music and Youth Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 14.

² Laughey, *Music and Youth Culture*, 14.

There are many ways to describe subcultures, and there are many subcultural traits that can be used to identify individuals belonging to a group. Sociologist Dick Hebdige, who specializes in the analysis of subcultures, analyzes the use of fashion and style and how it shapes identities within subcultures. Using countercultural movements revolving around music in Great Britain, Hebdige argues in his book, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, that fashion and style was used by these groups to self identify with each other, while working in opposition to mainstream culture and society. Hebdige notes

...and it is through the distinctive rituals of consumption, through style, that the subculture at once reveals its 'secret' identity and communicates its forbidden meanings. It is basically the way in which commodities are used in subculture which mark the subculture off from more orthodox cultural formations.³

The use of commodities becomes an important identifier of subcultures and in saying, "forbidden meanings," Hebdige implies that the use of objects by subcultures is always a taboo ritual. Instead these meanings are hidden, and only those within the borders of said subculture privy to their cultural significance. This creates a pattern of inclusion within the group, the knowledge of these hidden meanings encouraging cultural capital amongst members.

The use of cultural capital is important to identification and formation of subcultures. Ariel Zeynep and Craig J. Thompson, both professors of marketing, argue that amongst Indie groups, cultural capital is key to their own

³ Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen & Co LTD, 1979), 103.

identification, and is what separates them from a hipster stereotype. Zeynep and Thompson note that two Indie informants differentiate themselves from hipsters, because of their acquired cultural capital,

Scarlet and Amy both possess cultural authority—owing to their expert forms of cultural capital and occupational positions in the indie music scene—to differentiate the meanings of their legitimate consumption styles from the popularized and commercialized styles of the hipster.”⁴

While Amy and Scarlet both use cultural capital to include themselves in the Indie subculture, they also use their cultural capital to isolate themselves, and remove themselves from being included in other subcultures. Discussing Bourdieu in relationship to his work on material culture and the meanings attached to objects by subcultures, Hebdige notes that “cultural capital thus has inscribed within it an (undeclared) interest and functions to reproduce existing social relations.”⁵ The knowledge one exerts on the topics or ideologies of their own subculture, can place them within a position of cultural authority within their collective group, and in doing so, creates a hierarchy of knowledge amongst individuals who claim membership.

Although there is no concise or cohesive definition of subculture that is agreed upon, there is consensus amongst the differing fields of academia that

⁴ Arsel Zeynep and Craig J. Thompson, “Demythologizing Consumption Practices: How Consumers Protect Their Field-Dependent Identity Investments from Devaluing Marketplace Myths,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 37, no 5. (2011), 722.

⁵ Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*,

utilize the term subculture in their research and theory. The theory of subculture has been influenced by anthropology, sociology, and criminology, each branch of academia installing its own sets of paradigmatic theories, imbedding these theories within the research methodology. Professor Ken Gelder defines subculture in a way which describes it, but does not attach it to any one academic theory,

“a subculture is best understood as a social group that is in some way non-normative or nonconformist. Subcultures are ‘minor’ social formations, usually distinguished from dominant modes of sociality - family, religion, vocation, school, politics, nation, ‘society’ itself - and from what are often rather loosely referred to as ‘mainstream’ cultural practices.”⁶

Using nonconformity as a way to identify the borders of a subculture group, Gelder seeks to set up a group that works in opposition to the mainstream culture. A subculture’s decisions are then in direct opposition to some element of society, and as such, creates a boundary of inclusion amongst members who share similar ideologies and traits, while excluding those who do not have the cultural capital and authority of knowledge, pertaining to a specific subculture.

What is Hipster?

In both 2012 and 2013, *Travel + Leisure Magazine* ran an article titled “America’s Best Cities for Hipsters,” and rated the top 35 cities for hipsters. *Time*

⁶ Ken Gelder, 2011. "Subculture". In *The Encyclopedia of Literary and Cultural Theory*, edited by Michael Ryan , Michael Ryan , and Michael Ryan . Hoboken: Wiley. <http://www.library.umaine.edu/auth/EZProxy/test/authej.asp?url=http://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/wileylitcul/subculture/0>

Magazine directed their readers' attention to the 2012 article by publishing, "America's Top 10 Cities for Hipsters," which discussed *Travel + Leisures'* method in identifying hipster cities. *Time* notes "*T +L* readers scored 35 urban centers on such hipster-friendly amenities as live music, coffeehouses, independent boutiques, thrift stores, and flea markets, and on residents' hipsterish traits, such as tech-savvy and the propensity to microbrew."⁷ Although this describes the magazines methodology, and attractions to consumer practices, this still leaves a large void in identifying a hipster subculture. The traits they note, do not create or identify a subculture. In fact, many of these are shared by differing groups, making the connection to a specific subculture ambiguous. Anthropologist Roberta Edwards Lenkeit, defines subcultures as "smaller groups within a large complex. Behaviors, values, and artifacts are shared by group members."⁸ and in using this definition as a cohesive, ideological framework for analysis, the hipster subculture can be examined. So the question still stands, what is a hipster? More important for analysis though, is the question, how does the hipster construct their own identity?

The identification of hipsters is frequently associated with the consumer goods they appropriate as part of their subculture. Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer, for

⁷ Anoosh Chakelian, "America's Top 10 Cities for Hipsters," *Time Magazine*, April 19th, 2012, <http://newsfeed.time.com/2012/04/19/americas-top-ten-cities-for-hipsters/>.

⁸ Roberta Edwards Lenkeit, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology Fourth ed.* (New York: McGraw, 2009), 37.

instance, is overwhelmingly associated with the hipster subculture. Magazine articles with titles such as “After PBR: Will the Next Great Hipster Beer Please Stand Up,” “Pabst Blue Ribbon: \$250 million in Hipster Gold,” or “The Real Reason Hipsters Love PBR,” describe the deep affinity the hipster subculture has for this beer. Mark Greif, author of *What Was the Hipster?*, gives three separate definitions, trying to categorically identify the hipster. One such definition by Greif, includes a list of keywords such as “trucker hats; undershirts called ‘wifebeaters,’ worn as outerwear; the aesthetic of basement rec-room pornography, flash-lit Polaroids, fake wood paneling; Pabst Blue Ribbon; ‘porno’ or ‘pedophile’ mustaches; aviator glasses; Americana T-shirts for church socials, et cetera; tube socks; the last albums of Johnny Cash, produced by Rick Rubin; and tattoos.”⁹ This list illustrates fashion and style choices of early hipsters; Greif notes this list refers to the initial hipster subculture in 1999 in Brooklyn, and that further definitions identify the transformation of this group. *The Hipster Handbook*, written by Robert Lanham, is a satirical guide to identifying hipsters—which ironically has been appropriated by hipsters as an accepted guide to understanding their subculture—pointing out elements of fashion from mustaches to beards, flannel to vintage boots, dark, thick rimmed glasses to vintage clothing. These descriptors do not encompass the whole hipster subculture though, and just as any group progresses, so too do fashion and style. These identifiers help

⁹ Mark Greif, “Positions,” in *What Was the Hipster?* ed. Mark Greif, Kathleen Ross, and Dayna Tortorici (New York: n+1 Foundation, 2010), 9.

recognize a hipster by appearance, but do not explain the current ideologies of the hipster subculture. To gain a better understanding of the hipster subculture, the origins of hipsters in the 1950s must be examined.

A Hepcat: 1950s Hipsters

The early hipster generation of the 1950s was identified by ideals of nonconformity, cultural dissent, the development of a resilient or countercultural self, and occupying the fringes of mainstream society; willingly abandoning the constraints of popular culture. Philip R. Yanella, in his book *American Literature in Context after 1929*, describes the evolution of the hipster from the jazz scene of the 1940s. Beboppers developed from the jazz musician, and bop became a

rebellious rejection of conventional white jazz as well as conventional behavior...

Hipsters, in brief, a largely young and white group, were associated with the rebelliousness of bop. The hipster was reported to speak a dialect that had first developed among black musicians.¹⁰

The hipster found their voice through bop, creating an argot for themselves, and in doing so, created a pattern of inclusion amongst their members. In appropriating the dialect of black musicians, the white hipster found an identity, and in doing so, the hipster had sought to be hip.

¹⁰ Philip R. Yanella, *American Literature in Context After 1929* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 66.

The hipster was touted as an existentialist, one who focused on the self, and created their own world around them. Mailer noted that the hipster is the “American Existentialist” and

the only hip morality...is to do what one feels whenever and wherever it is possible, and—
this is how the war of the Hip and the Square begins—to be engaged in one primal battle:
to open the limits of the possible for oneself, for oneself alone because that is one’s need.¹¹

Mailer’s position on this topic is not unique, and Caroline Bird, author of the article published in a 1957 *Harper’s Bazaar* titled “Born 1930: The Unlost Generation” agreed. In her article she explained the hipster’s beliefs and noted “Our search for the rebels of the generation led us to the hipster. The hipster is an enfant terrible turned inside out.”¹² The hipster of the 1950s is the antithesis to mainstream society. Their goal is the self, immediate intense pleasure. As Mailer writes about love in relation to hipsters, “Not love as the search for a mate, but love as the search for an orgasm more apocalyptic than the one preceded it.”¹³ It is not just sheer pleasure though, that the hipster of the fifties sought for the self, but enlightenment as well.

Enlightenment and the betterment of the self, brought about the disassociation of the hipster from commonplace standards of American society. In

¹¹ Mailer, “The White Negro,” in *Advertisements for Myself* (Putnam, New York, 1959), 354.

¹² Caroline Bird, “Born 1930: The Unlost Generation,” in *The Greenwich Village Reader*, ed. June Skinner Sawyers (New York: First Cooper Square Press, 2001), 357.

¹³ Mailer, “The White Negro,” 338-58.

1959, Eugene Burdick, argued that hipsters were involved in a revolution in which the education of self, and the consumption of knowledge was of the utmost importance. Burdick agrees with Mailer's and Bird's assumptions regarding the abandonment of society in regard for the self,

he [hipster] 'disaffiliates.' This means that he withdraws from the senseless organizations of orthodox society, whether these be political parties or corporations...The hipster is determined to live on the safe margins of society, taking whatever jobs he can, making no firm commitment to any organization. These organizations include, it is made clear almost with virulence, the family.¹⁴

Mailer argues in "The White Negro," that the hipster lives without roots, unfettered by society, loosed by his own wish for knowledge, and detached from any connections to society. They seek to "set out on that uncharted journey into the rebellious imperatives of the self..."¹⁵ The hipster is the rebel, the nonconformist, the cultural dissenter, creating their own culture, choosing for themselves how their world is shaped. These qualities embodied by the hipster of the fifties, are attributes as well, for the hipster today.

A Hip Link to the Past

Like hipsters of the 1950s, who appropriated the black influence of Jazz and Bop to create their subculture, the modern hipster has appropriated elements

¹⁴ Eugene Burdick, "The Politics of the Beat Generation," *The Western Political Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (1959), 554.

¹⁵ Mailer, "The White Negro," 339.

of suburban whiteness to create theirs. Mark Greif, who holds his PhD in American Studies, argues that modern day hipster's "source of a priori knowledge seemed to be nostalgia for suburban whiteness. As the White Negro had once fetishized blackness, the White Hipster fetishized the violence, instinctiveness, and rebelliousness of lower-middle-class 'white trash'."¹⁶ Modern hipsters achieved this by harkening back to their childhood, taking elements of fashion which fit their nostalgia for suburban whiteness, and remembrances of their youth. Elements of fashion, from the trucker hat, the wife beater tank top, to the 'porn stache,' as Mark Greif notes, are all signifiers of the early hipster population of Brooklyn in 1999. These elements of style all refer to the hipster millennials' childhood. The book and website, *Dads are the Original Hipsters* by Brad Getty, is filled with images of men from the late seventies and early eighties. These men are found wearing clothing from that same period, and having mustaches and hair which modern hipsters emulate. Fashion, which identifies with the late seventies and early eighties, became an outward identifier of hipster values, and as such, is an important component of the hipster subculture.

The modern hipster took this suburban whiteness, and inhabited neighborhoods in cities throughout the United States. Like the hipsters of the fifties, who dwelled in Greenwich Village in New York City, modern hipsters inhabit neighborhoods and cities like Williamsburg in Brooklyn, New York, and

¹⁶ Mark Greif, "What Was The Hipster?," *New York Magazine*, October 24th, 2010, <http://nymag.com/news/features/69129/>

Portland, Maine, creating small enclaves of likemindedness; defining the imagined geographic boundaries for their subculture. Greif associates Wicker Park, Chicago with the initial resurgence of hipsters at the end of the twentieth century. Using ethnographic work on Wicker Park by sociologist Richard Lloyd, Greif argues that Wicker Park became the perfect environment for the hipster to develop. The interaction of the neo-bohemian, indie-bohemian, and “yuppie,” in Wicker Park, created an individual, the hipster, who aligns themselves “both with rebel subculture and with the dominant class, and thus opens up a poisonous conduit between the two.”¹⁷ The hipster chooses urban neighborhoods, retreating from the suburbs of their childhood. The urbanity of city living, mixed with the communal, social appeal, of habitation designated as neighborhoods, create the imagined landscape of the suburban neighborhood, which is attractive to a hipster population. As people in the 70s and 80s abandoned city living for suburban neighborhoods, the modern hipster has inversely migrated to city neighborhoods, bringing with them vestiges of their suburban youth. These hipsters, in migrating to the urban habitat, are able to create their own social environment. Abandoning the mass consumerism of strip mall living and the influence of big box stores, hipsters rebel against consumerism, choosing areas where the local owned business has the ability to flourish. It is with this abandonment of material culture and consumerism, in which we find the nonconformity of the modern hipster.

¹⁷ Mark Greif, “What Was The Hipster?,” *New York Magazine*, October 24th, 2010, <http://nymag.com/news/features/69129/>

Like the hipster of the 1950s, so too does the hipster of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries embrace nonconformity. Millennials, those born between 1981 and 1996, who find themselves entrenched within the hipster ideology, create the boundaries of their subculture through their actions and choices as a collective group.¹⁸ Like hipsters of the 1950s who were “trying to get back at the conformists by lying low...You can’t interview a hipster because his main goal is to keep out of a society which, he thinks, is trying to make everyone over in its own image,” so too are modern hipsters.¹⁹ As Lanham notes, “hipsters possess an innate contempt for franchises, strip malls, and the corporate world in general...Hipsters never admit to being Hipsters.”²⁰ The modern hipster, much like their 1950s counterparts, rail against the role corporations maintain in shaping the world, and how the choices available in society are molded by advertisements and main stream media. Inherently, businesses who appeal to the mass market lose the purchase power of the hipster demographic. The hipster believes they make their own choice, without undue influence from advertisements when purchasing goods, and in doing so, sets up a pattern of nonconformity and cultural dissent through their economic practices.

¹⁸ http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2014/03/2014-03-07_generations-report-version-for-web.pdf

¹⁹ Bird, “Born 1930,” 357.

²⁰ Robert Lanham, *The Hipster Handbook* (New York: Anchor Books, 2003), 12-13.

Consumption Practices

The economic choices that are made by individuals directly reflect and construct their own identity. Through consumption practices people reveal their intentions. As professors of marketing Arsel Zeynep and Craig J. Thompson note, “consumers’ investments in a field of consumption leave enduring sociocultural marks on their identities in the form of practical or tacit knowledge, habituated tendencies, and cultivated aesthetic tastes.”²¹ These tastes help construct an individual’s identity, and the identity of a subculture. It is through the consumption of specific artifacts that we find attributes of the hipster subculture and how they seek to craft their identity. One product which has exemplified this, is the hipster consumption of beer.

Beer

Beer is an important cultural artifact of hipster subculture, and beers like Pabst Blue Ribbon and Narragansett help hipsters shape the identity of their subculture. Pabst Blue Ribbon, so affectionately nicknamed PBR by hipsters, has seen a resurgence of sales in the last ten years, with American consumption of PBR having increased 200 percent since 2004.²² This growth has moved in tandem with the spread of hipster subculture and as a result, PBR has enjoyed

²¹ Zeynep and Thompson, *Demythologizing Consumption Practices*, 804.

²² Rebecca Hiscott, “The Read Reasons Hipsters Love PBR,” *The Huffington Post*, May 29th, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/05/29/pbr-coolness-study_n_5399109.html

increased profits. Brianna Erlich, co-author of the blog “Stuff Hipsters Hate” and book by the same title, notes, “I like PBR because it doesn’t taste like beer...It tastes like water. Dirty water.”²³ This description of PBR paints a picture of distaste and unpalatability for this beer. Her description of “Dirty Water” does not market well for good flavor, and conjures images of gutters filled with rain water, while trash from city streets clog storm drains. And yet this beer seems to be endorsed by hipsters as the unofficial beer sponsor of their subcultural movement. Erlich goes on to call PBR “the nectar of the hipster gods.” This juxtaposition of nectar and dirty water conflicts with each other, and embodies the ironic disposition within which the hipster subculture is steeped. If it is not for flavor, than what is the attraction to PBR and other sub premium beers for hipsters, especially to be held in such high regard?

Pabst Blue Ribbon is an underdog of beer, and it is because of this trait, that the hipster subculture appropriates this beer as a cultural artifact. Rene Reinsberg, founder and CEO of the menu-advisory company Locu and having done extensive research on PBR, notes that, “cheap signifies underdog. The underdog thing is important to this audience. If a beer is expensive, it doesn’t fit the story. Hipsters are into adopting the underdog.”²⁴ With the hipster subculture

²³ Julie Wernau, “Move to LA Could Tap Pabst’s Character,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 13th, 2011. http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2011-05-13/business/ct-biz-0514-pabst-20110513_1_pabst-blue-ribbon-schlitz-pabst-brewing

²⁴ Brad Tuttle, “After PBR: Will the Next Great Hipster Beer Please Stand Up?,” *Time*, May 26th, 2013. <http://business.time.com/2013/05/26/after-pbr-will-the-next-great-hipster-beer-please-stand-up/>

striving to stay outside the norms of society, and always yearning for a retro-chic identity, it seems important for their beer of choice to have the same characteristics. The hipsters consumption of PBR helps shape their own identity. Drinking Pabst Blue Ribbon—an “underdog” beer—the hipster creates their own image, and reinforces the boundaries of their subculture. In choosing PBR, hipsters maintain their identities as participating in a counter cultural movement. As a result of Pabst Brewing Companies’ business practices, it is a brand which fits neatly into this category.

PBR is recognized as counter cultural, because it has no advertising budget at all, and it is with this we find the appeal for the hipster subculture. In 2009 while Pabst Brewing Company spent no money at all, and conducted no advertising campaigns for their beer, Miller High Life, another sub premium cheap beer, invested \$4.5 million in the marketing and advertisement of their product.²⁵ Any advertising Pabst’s Brewing Company conducts is sponsorship of bike rallies and other events which cater to a counterculture population, and even then, PBR does not showcase their sponsorship in the same ways as other breweries do. At a bike messenger rally in Portland, Oregon, Pabst Blue Ribbon contributed \$1,750 in prizes for the event, and “virtually no banners or signs announced this, and no

²⁵ Jeremy Mullman, “Pabst Blue Ribbon: an America’s Hottest Brands Case Study,” *Advertising Age*, November 16th, 2009. <http://adage.com/article/special-report-america-s-hottest-brands-2009/pabst-blue-ribbon-america-s-hottest-brands-case-study/140481/>

one from Pabst showed up to glad-hand the bikers.”²⁶ The significance of their silence in sponsorship, and their choice of venue as well, comes together to represent what is viewed as dissent against main stream culture.

Dissent against main stream media is a key attribute for the hipster subculture, and PBR seems to embody this quality in marketing practices. Madhavi Sunder, a law professor at University of California, Davis, argues that cultural dissent is a conscious act. Those who diverge from the mainstream of cultural society are

trying to modernize, or broaden, traditional terms of cultural membership. Today, more and more individuals are claiming a right to dissent from traditional cultural norms and to make new cultural meanings—that is, to reinterpret cultural norms in ways more favorable to them. Not satisfied to choose between tradition and modernity, people in the modern world want both. They want culture, but on their own terms.²⁷

While the act of drinking PBR seems a less powerful form of cultural dissent compared to examples used by Sunder—such as gay-Irish American’s, marching in the St. Patrick’s day parade, announcing themselves both Irish and gay—it is the choice itself by hipsters that gives way to dissent. Hipsters maintain their identity through these acts of cultural dissent, willingly creating the boundaries of their own subculture. The physical act of drinking PBR does not shape the identity of

²⁶ Rob Walker, “The Marketing of No Marketing,” *The New York Times*, June 22nd, 2003. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/22/magazine/the-marketing-of-no-marketing.html>

²⁷ Madhavi Sunder, “Cultural Dissent,” *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 54, no 3. (2001), 498.

those who participate within the hipster subculture. Instead, hipsters are reinterpreting cultural norms by attaching values to this beer. These values are what help shape, identify, and maintain their subculture. Drinking sub premium cheap beer is not the act of dissent, instead, by choosing PBR, hipsters rebuke the multibillion dollar beer industry, supporting the underdog, deciding what they will drink, refusing to allow companies to influence their choices through multimillion dollar advertisement campaigns.

While other brewing companies inundate television advertisement space, and find their way into bars splashed upon tin signs, glass mirrors, and neon signs, PBR stands as an outlier to all of this. Neal Stewart, a divisional marketing manager for Pabst Brewing Company, who once worked for Anheuser-Busch as part of marketing in St. Louis, noticed key differences between drinkers of PBR and drinkers of other main stream brands. Stewart was surprised to find bike-messenger's in Portland, Oregon embraced PBR, and detested marketing practices of brewing companies. Changing his tactics, which he acquired as a marketing representative for Anheuser-Busch, Stewart found it was his muted presence which attracted PBR drinkers. Working as the rep for Pabst Brewing Company, Stewart would not advertise himself when visiting bars in Portland, Oregon, instead he made sure word of mouth informed the bar patrons of his occupation. Stewart noted it was a subdued presence which won PBR drinkers over, he "would walk in — wearing street clothes, never a Pabst logo — tell the bartender who he was and 'really just sit there'... the word would leak out — 'Hey, Pabst guy is

here...’ I was mobbed.”²⁸ Stewart, in forcing the patrons to come to him—allowing the patrons to essentially discover Stewart—created an aura of nonconformity through his muted presence, and as a result, embodied the attitudes of hipster subculture. Counter culture is nonconformity, a form of subversion, which clashes against prevalent society. Stewart conducted himself just as that, a nonconformist by not forcing his product upon patrons, but allowing the consumers to make their own choice, which counters marketing practices. The significance of analyzing PBR as a cultural artifact lies in the attitudes and beliefs that surround the beer itself. It is not for the flavor which the hipster subculture consumes mass quantities of PBR, and it is not for its marketing practices, which are vacant, instead it is what PBR represents, nonconformity.

While the choice of drinking sub premium cheap beer is viewed as nonconformist, the action of choosing these beers has a greater role in reinforcing values of the hipster subculture. The way we choose and consume alcohol, says much about a group. According to Anthropologist Michael Dietler, alcohol plays important parts in the construction of social categories amongst groups. Dietler notes that

Drinking patterns are not viewed simply as reflections of social organization, manifestations of deep cognitive structure(in the structuralist mode), nor as simple expressions of cultural identity, but rather as practices through which personal and group identity are actively constructed, embodied, performed, and transformed. In other words,

²⁸ Rob Walker, “The Marketing of No Marketing,” June 22nd, 2003.

drinking is seen as a significant force in the construction of the social world, both in the sense of creating an ideal imagined world of social relationships and in the pragmatic sense of strategically crafting one's place within the imagined world, or challenging it.²⁹

This constructed group identity is embodied in the hipster appropriation of sub premium, cheap beers, such as PBR. The consumption of these beers by the hipster subculture across the United States, is not a singular, isolated event. Hipsters not only craft their place in the world through the consumption of sub premium, cheap beers, they also challenge the construction of the social world. In choosing these beers, hipsters shape their identities in opposition to consumerism and capitalism. Considered an underdog of beer, and used to reinforce hipster values of cultural dissent, PBR becomes the conduit through which, as Dietler notes, personal and group identity are formed. It is part of a conscious effort to identify and organize a subculture by creating a pattern of inclusion with sub premium cheap beers acting as cultural artifacts. These beers are the embodiment of hipster beliefs and it is with the mass consumption of these beers, and the adoption of them as cultural artifacts, do we find hipsters "crafting one's place within the imagined world."³⁰

It would be a mistake to argue PBR is the only beer drank by hipsters, and this is far from the case. Many other beers, such as Ballantine Ale, Narragansett Ale, Genessee Ale, and Yuenling, amongst many others, appeal to hipsters. These

²⁹ Michael Dietler, "Alcohol:Anthropological/Archaeological Perspectives," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35, (2006), 235.

³⁰ Ibid., 235.

other beers are sub premium cheap beers as well, and many are regional beers. As a regional beer, this restricts their ability to gain a widespread demographic and sales profile, of which PBR enjoys. In fact many writer's have pondered when PBR will be dethroned and the next sub premium beer take its place. This has not occurred yet and Pabst Brewing Company along with hipsters, have defied many marketing experts who have speculated the decline would occur six years ago in 2008.³¹ Narragansett, or 'Gansett, so nicknamed by hipsters, has been on the rise as well. Owners of the brewery have taken marketing directly to the hipster population, with a monthly "girl of the week" featured on their website "who, in addition to enjoying the beer, is usually an enthusiast of some hipster activity like roller derby."³² Although Mark Davidson, founder of the beer-price-tracking website SaveOnBrew.com, argues that by directly targeting a hipster audience, Narragansett could make their product unappealing to hipsters. As Davidson notes, "you can't set out to be the beer of a counterculture. Just like you can't set out to make a viral video."³³ Although Narragansett brewing actively targets a hipster audience, their direct connection to the local community, and a long standing history rooted in New England region, overcomes their overt marketing to this subculture.

³¹ Brad Tuttle, "After PBR: Will the Next Great Hipster Beer Please Stand Up?," *Time*, May 26th, 2013.

³² Ibid.

³³ Mark Davidson, "The Plus," *The Anatomy of a Comeback*, June 18th, 2013. <http://thebuildnetwork.com/leadership/narragansett-comeback/>

The slogan on the Narragansett Brewing Company website markets directly to the nonconformist beer drinker, “Made on Honor, Sold on Merit,” insinuating a word of mouth reputation versus mass marketing, and in doing so, appeals to the hipster subculture.³⁴ Much of the website is a homage to the early days of their brewery, with images of old advertisements gracing one page, while another page titled “Gansett Story” has a retro video showing the history of Narragansett Brewing. This page is set up around the companies long standing history of brewing, and its connection to the local community, citing itself as the “Official Beer of the Clam Since 1890” and even reproducing vintage cans for “crush it like Quint Week.” Referencing the tragic hero, Quint, who meets his death in the movie *Jaws*, these retro style cans are supposed to harken back to a hipsters childhood, much like the fashion style of the hipster, emulating beer which one’s father could have drank. Quint is seen throughout the scenes aboard his boat the *Orca*, drinking Naragansett Beer, and crushing one in his hand—a difficult feat since early pop top beer cans were made from a different alloy than aluminum, making the cans rigid. Unlike Pabst Brewing Company, Narragansett Brewing has overtly embraced the hipster, and yet has succeeded in this campaign. Although this sub premium cheap beer is marketing directly to the hipster subculture, a subculture who prides itself on rebelling against its own categorization, it still lacks marketing campaigns like other beer companies. The unusual marketing

³⁴ Home page, Narragansett Brewing Company, <http://www.narragansettbeer.com/tag/ads>

practices, such as “crush it like Quint cans” and highlighting hipster girls of Narragansett Brewing, appeals to a hipster demographic, and yet maintains the illusion of the nonconformist, sub premium, cheap beer, through its lack of mainstream advertising and commercial spots.

Regional Craft Brewing

With the creation of neighborhood and community as an important factor for the hipster subculture, the importance of regional businesses and enterprises would be key. Cheap is not the only indicator for the attraction to beer, and craft beer is the exception for the hipster subculture. In a six year span, craft breweries almost doubled the production of beer, from 7.1 million barrels of beer brewed in 2006, to 13.2 millions of barrels of beer brewed in 2012, and have continued to enjoy exponential growth. In 1887 there were 2,011 breweries operating in the United States. Around 1977, at its all time low, there were only 89 breweries operating.³⁵ Rebounding from the 1970s and 1980s low, “the number of operating breweries in the U.S. in 2014 grew 19%, totaling 3,464 breweries, with 3,418 defined as craft. They include 1,871 microbreweries, 1,412 brewpubs and 135

³⁵ <http://www.fsrmagazine.com/content/brewers-association-reports-continued-growth-us-craft-brewers>

regional craft breweries.”³⁶ This resurgence in beer, and especially craft brewing, is attributed to millennials, and, as well, attached to the hipster subculture.

Hipsters are not solely responsible for the craft beer boom, which the United States has been experiencing, but their contribution to this growing market is significant. In an article for *New York Daily News* James Panero notes that Sixpoint brewing, found in Red Hook in 2004 is a hipster favorite.³⁷ Brooklyn Brewery, situated in the heart of Williamsburg, Brooklyn, considered one of the most hipster locales in the United States, moved back to the neighborhood in the 1990’s, after brewing upstate New York in the 1980s and distributing and selling their product through Bushwick, Brooklyn. They moved back into the city around the same time the Galapagos art collective opened in Williamsburg, and as Zukin notes “in a way, artisanal beer production returned Williamsburg to its origins, but with higher-class commodities.”³⁸ As Williamsburg had a resurgence of economy due to an immigration of bohemian minded individuals, the tastes of these individuals shaped the businesses that flourished, and third-place servicescapes dominated the landscape.

Portland, Maine, has seen an increase in breweries within the city, and the state of Maine as well. In 2015, Portland is home to twelve craft breweries, and

³⁶ Real Beer, March 16, 2015. <http://www.realbeer.com/blog/?p=3086>

³⁷ James Panero, “Hail to the hipsters,” *New York Daily News*, June 24th, 2012. <http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/hail-hipsters-article-1.1100963>

³⁸ Sharon Zukin, *Naked City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 49.

within and outside the greater city limits, many more craft breweries have taken shape, brewing malty and hopped brews, which find their way into beer bars in this hipster city on the shores of Casco Bay. Ox Bow Brewery opened a tasting room in Portland in 2014, even though their brewery is situated 52 miles up the coast on a rural farm in Newcastle, Maine. Such is the attraction of craft brews to the hipster subculture, there seems to be no shortage of local craft beers which dominate the taps at locations like *Arcadia National Bar* and *LFK* both situated in downtown Portland, Maine, and considered hipster locales. The draw of craft brews complicates the issue of beer when comparing such products to the likes of PBR, 'Gansett, and other sub-premium cheap beers, contradicting earlier statements of cheap and dirty tasting as an appeal to the hipster subculture. So why is a beer like PBR which is described by Edmund Hillary to taste like morning breath, B.O. and as if a dirty pingpong ball had fallen into this golden brew, drank by a population that also revere's craft brewing?³⁹

PBR is attractive to hipsters because it does not brand itself, it does not outwardly market itself to any demographic, and neither do craft breweries. As the hipster subculture moves in opposition to capitalism, they support local businesses, which is a form of cultural dissent in opposition to a larger market economy. Local breweries rely on the knowledge of their employees to create a quality product, which develops a level of authenticity that the brewery is

³⁹ Alexandra Petri, "Time to Buy PBR, Everyone," *The Washington Post*, March 3rd, 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/compost/wp/2014/03/03/time-to-buy-pbr-everyone/>

controlled for the best product. Brooklyn Brewery only hires individuals who have brewed beer on their own, their employment forms asking “Do you home-brew? If the answer is ‘no,’ then start home brewing and we’ll talk afterwards.”⁴⁰ Many breweries in Portland are brewed by the owners of the business, rather than farmed out to corporate employees. Bissell Brothers in Portland, Maine has been well received by the hipster community, and is a brewery which is operated, literally, by the Bissell brothers.⁴¹ This level of care shows attention that the hipster subculture gravitates towards, and is required in the craft brewing industry. Without attention to detail, and the belief that a craft brewery is run by the owners, instead of vacant corporations pumping out a recipe, a craft brewery would not receive approval from the hipster subculture.

As breweries have been bought up by large global corporations—conglomerates who not only own breweries, but subsidiaries of other industries—the craft breweries maintain a purity for the beer drinker, developing an artisanal product. Craft brewing maintains the illusion that you can see where your beer comes from. Like going to the butcher shop and purchasing a ribeye steak, watching the process of knife slicing through meat, tendon and fat, tracing its way around bone, the hipster sees where their beer is brewed, knows the brewery, and can even drink there when the breweries taps are flowing. This concept embraces and creates the neighborhood appeal which the hipster subculture seeks to create

⁴⁰ Panero, “Hail to the Hipsters.”

⁴¹ Team page, www.bissellbrothers.com

in their urban landscape. Even though the malts and hops are not grown right there on the grounds of the brewery, there is a comfort in seeing the brewing process, touching the tanks which held the beer, shaking the hand of the brewer who put hours into the artful cold malt brew which condensates the glass as one grips it on a Friday night. Having breweries right in the community gives the drinker a greater say in what is made, and gives the consumer a sense of control over their product. At a bar, the brewer may be sitting right next to the patron. Large breweries which ship beer throughout the country become faceless entities, corporate giants, the same as big box stores, peddling nothing but a product. The craft brewery becomes part of the community, and the hipster subculture rallies around the local and the artisanal.

Craft beer represents the quality of artisanal production which the hipster subculture gravitates toward. Artisanal production has been on the rise in hipster centric areas, lending this trend to the entrepreneurial spirit of this subculture. Products crafted range from pickles to beer, chocolate to screen printed t-shirts and many other items. The Mast Brothers Chocolate company in NYC took artisanal to a new level, hiring a hand crafted schooner to sail their chocolate into Brooklyn, from the Dominican Republic. After the chocolate arrives they hand sort the beans and let the chocolate rest for thirty days before selling.⁴² This attention to detail cannot be found in a large corporation, simply due to the sheer volume

⁴² Henry Alford, "How I Became a Hipster," *The New York Times*, May 1, 2013. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/02/fashion/williamsburg.html?_r=0

of production which is required to be sold for mass consumption. Adam Davidson, author of the article “Don’t Mock the Artisanal-Pickle Makers,” argues that hipsters are classical capitalists, and their craft businesses are simply a rejection of modern industrial capitalism. Davidson believes that “the craft approach is actually something new—a happy refinement of the excesses of our industrial era plus a return to the vision laid out by capitalism’s godfather, Adam Smith.”⁴³ This attention to detail is illustrated in the craft brewing industry in hipster centric cities. Portland, Oregon, a hipster city, has 83 breweries in its metro area, 220 in the state of Oregon and account for 20% of beer sold in their state.⁴⁴ While the artisanal component is important to craft brewers when catering to a hipster demographic, there is backlash against hipsters in their love for craft brewing. This can be seen by the outward campaign of one brewery in South Africa, which has blatantly marketed against hipsters drinking their beer.

When a Beer Hates a Hipster...

Garagista Beer Co. is a brewery in Cape Town, South Africa, and a craft brew phenomenon. It is not just the taste of their beer that sets them apart from other breweries, but their unusual ad campaign. Finding information out about Garagista Beer Co. is associated in one form or another with hipsters. This does

⁴³ Adam Davidson, “Don’t Mock the Artisanal Pickle Makers,” *The New York Times Magazine*, February 15, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/19/magazine/adam-davidson-craft-business.html>

⁴⁴ Oregon Craft Beer, “Facts Page.” <http://oregoncraftbeer.org/facts/>

not truly seem strange, considering the close connection between the hipster subculture and craft brewing, but this isn't that kind of connection.

Like Budweiser's 2015 Superbowl commercial which used caricatures of hipsters to rail against the craft brewing industry, hoping to create a negative, pretentious image for their tastes in beer, Garagista Beer Co. has taken to using stereotypes and negativity in their beer's advertisement campaign as well.⁴⁵ Where Garagista differs from Budweiser is that they are a craft brew and as a result, appeal to a hipster demographic. But their negative advertisements towards hipsters creates a practice of exclusion, distancing themselves from a potential consumer market. Garagista Beer Co. identifies their target audience,



Figure 1. Garagista Advertising Campaign 2014

This poster represents the beer named "Tears of the Hipster" boasting the first beer to be brewed using tears from hipsters.

⁴⁵ Jim Vorel, "Analyzing Budweiser's Hypocritical, Anti-Craft Beer Super Bowl Ad," *Paste Magazine*, February 2, 2015. <http://www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2015/02/valuable-lessons-i-learned-from-budweisers-hypocri.html>

advertising a product in efforts to appeal to a different demographic than the hipster subculture.

Garagista Beer Co. uses stereotypes to create a hipster caricature, and as a result intentionally mocks the hipster subculture. The hipster is viewed by Garagista as a nuisance, an inconvenient member of society reviled by those who come in contact with one. Figure 2 shows the Garagista Beer Co. poster and label for their beer, so cheekily named *Tears of the Hipster*. The label and poster shows a caricature of a hipster crying, with all the stereotypical features that is associated with the hipster subculture, as tears flow down his long beard into a pint glass. The poster states that it is “The First Craft Beer Brewed From the Tears of Hipsters.” Lawrence Blum, professor of philosophy, notes that “stereotypes are cultural entities, widely held by persons in the culture or the society in question, and widely recognized by persons who may or may not hold the stereotype,” and also that individuals can have stereotypes that are not cultural, but are generalizations which they place on a certain group of people , due to singular events and experiences.⁴⁶ The use of this beer label (fig. 1) is meant to be widely recognized, and as such, uses a marketing campaign which hopes to appeal to a demographic which is anti-hipster.

⁴⁶ Lawrence Blum, “Stereotypes And Stereotyping: A Moral Analysis,” *Philosophical Papers*, Vol. 33, no. 3. (2004), 252-253.

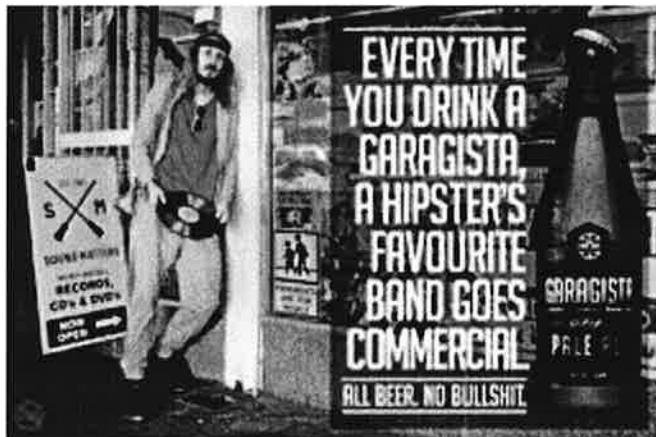
Garagista Beer Co. does not just deride the hipster subculture in this one poster, but instead uses a series of advertisements and a youtube commercial, which mock hipster fashion and lifestyle choices. Posters for Garagista beer directly mock hipster subculture with posters comparing their brewing process to hipster features like mustaches and beards. One poster brags “While you were crafting your moustache, we were crafting our beer,” while another states “our



Figures 2 and 3 Garagista Advertising Campaign 2014

steeping process traps more flavor than your manicured beard. (figs. 2 and 3) Other advertisements mock hipster’s taste in music, do-it-yourself aesthetic, and their love for fixed gear bikes. In each advertisement the person who represents a hipster, is supposed to be dressed as a hipster, focusing on trends and fashion that

make these individuals stand out from mainstream culture. Again, by choosing outrageous fashion which stands out the clothing which deviates the most from mainstream, the advertisement turns the hipster into a caricature, projecting society's beliefs of stereotypes on this subculture. By directing their focus to negatively attack attributes of the hipster subculture which are outward identifiers, features which are part of self display, Garagista aims to attract an audience that has similar views and stereotype beliefs of the hipster subculture. In



Figures 4 and 5 Garagista Advertising Campaign 2014



targeting the hipster, Garagista tries to make themselves mainstream culture, which is what Budweiser attempted to do with their Super Bowl advertisement. Their advertisements blatantly push away a hipster audience, and in doing so, a

millennial audience as well. In one advertisement they mock age, music, and the appropriation of vintage t-shirts, “For those who know the Ramones made music, not T-shirts.” This poster implies that the hipster is not vested in the band, but instead has appropriated it for merely fashion. Implying a level of authenticity in the rock band t-shirt, this advertisements suggests that age is a factor in the authentic experience, and hipsters are merely appropriating the shirt as a fashion item, without meaningful representation. In doing this, Garagista segregates a millennial population, by giving cultural authority to only those who were in their formative years during the punk era, and in doing so, shows Garagista as a beer for an older audience, reaching out to a population to whom hipsters are moving in opposition.

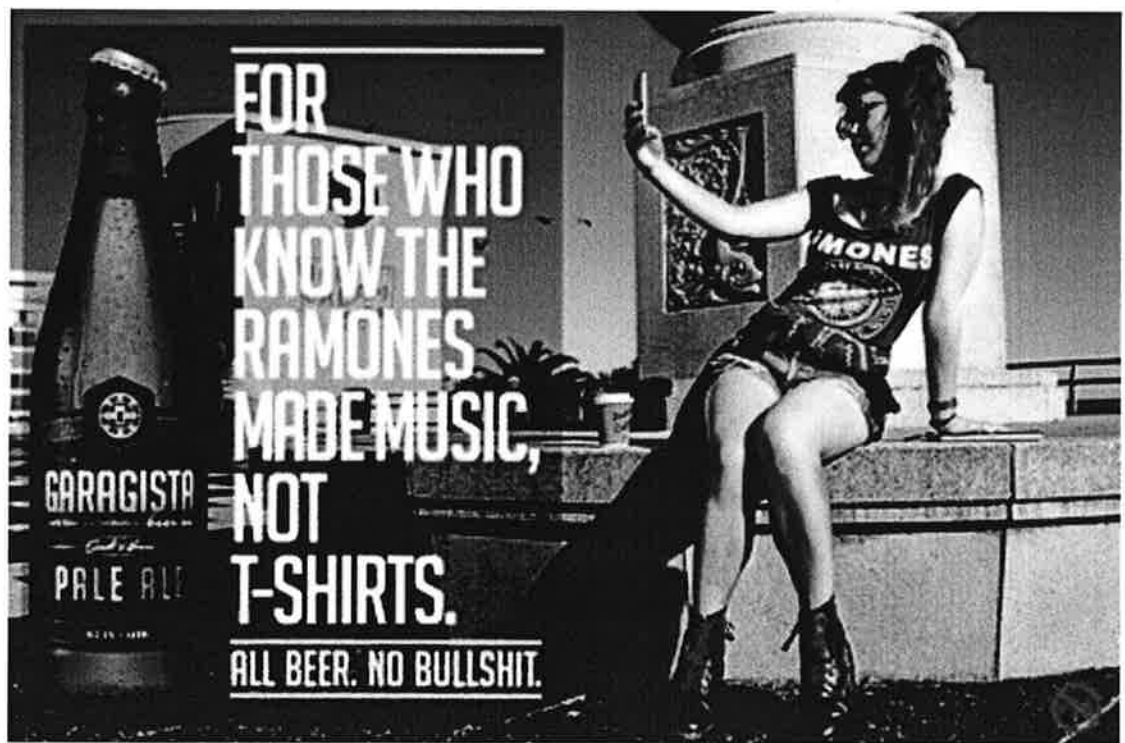


Figure 6 Garagista Advertising Campaign 2014

Garagista Beer Co. advertises to a population using stereotypes, appealing to those with an aversion to the hipster subculture, and in promoting this image, distinctly alienates a portion of the population in the efforts to attract a certain demographic. Karen E. James and Paul J. Hensel argue that, “negative advertising identifies the competitor for the purpose of ‘imputing inferiority,’ i.e., with the intent of damaging the image or reputation of the competition.”⁴⁷ Although hipsters are not a competitor to Garagista, their negative ads still serve the same purpose that James and Hensel describe. By utilizing these negative advertisements, Garagista positions themselves in opposition to other craft brews,

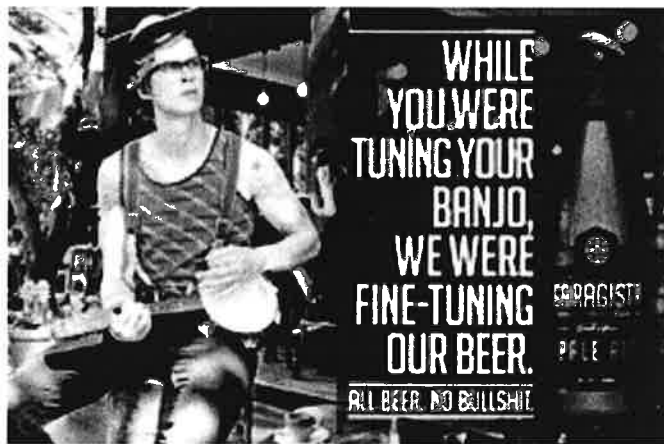
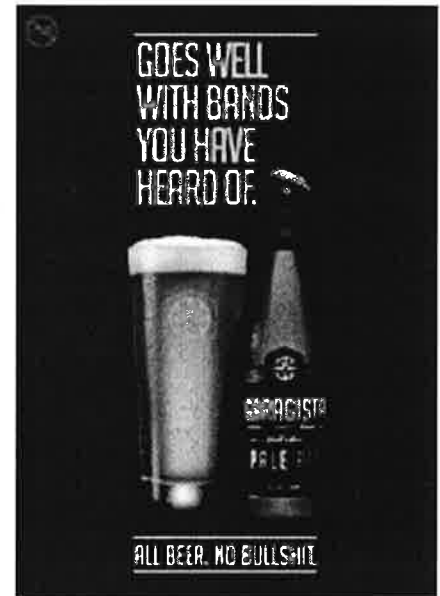


Figure 7 and 8 Garagista Advertising Campaign 2014



⁴⁷ Karen E. James and Paul J. Hensel, “Negative Advertising: The Malicious Strain of Comparative Advertising,” *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 20, no. 2. (1991), 54.

aligning their beer with domestic brewing. Attracting a fringe audience of domestic beer drinkers, they bridge the void between domestic brewing and craft brewing. Garagista's advertising points to a population in society which has an aversion to the hipster subculture, and these detractors can be quite vocal on their vehemence for this group.

Chapter Two

Hello. Is it Me Your Looking For?

The Hipster as Media Invention, or Subcultural Movement

“To use two stereotypes, there was a shift from the *Vice* hipster to the Portlandia hipster. It’s about being environmentally conscious, knowing where your products come from, and supporting local artisans.”

Elizabeth Segran, “The Fall of the Hipster Brand: Inside the Decline of American Apparel and Urban Outfitters”

There is much debate on the actual existence of the hipster subculture. Some believe that hipster is nothing more than a mere invention of the media industry, while others believe that it is an aberration of the indie music subculture. Many, in their estimation of hipsters, focus solely on the exterior qualities of hipsters, such as clothing choice, facial and hair styles, musical tastes, and other outward identifiers. Subcultures can and do exist outside of stereotypes held by the dominant culture, and do not always fit within the boundaries of what society believes they know about that group. What some believe is hipster, or what has been deemed as such, is many times misguided interpretations in which vain characteristics are used to lump together people into a group.

Disbelievers of the Hipster?

There is much debate on whether or not hipsters exist. This argument centers on the belief that the hipster subculture is nothing more than an invention of main stream media just to sell clothing and hipster goods. Many point to, and focus on, Urban Outfitters as a prime example of a hipster company targeting a hipster audience. Those who argue their disbelief in this subculture believe that the term is a self perpetuated media myth, which has gained momentum and crossed the boundaries of fashion trend to cultural commodity. Many articles which delve into this discussion have a tendency to focus on just the material culture of hipsters and focus on outward appearance, fashion choices, and their consumer spending habits, without analyzing the meanings behind these choices and their meanings in the context of a subculture. It does not help either that the overwhelming majority of hipsters take philosophical stances on the limitations that occur by being labeled in general, noting that they are not hipsters, bohemians, or artists, but people coming together in certain areas with similar intentions. While sitting on a panel of speakers on the hipster subculture Christian Lorentzen noted, "Indeed, I have never met a hipster. I deny that there ever existed any such thing. I deny this categorically, and I denounce the very category."

I despise it,” illustrating the debate which exists around the existence of the hipster subculture.¹

Hipster is a term entrenched in mass media since the 1950s, but had gained momentum again in the 1980s and prolifically increased in the 1990s and 2000s. Between 1923 and 2009 the word “hipster” was used by the New York Times in a total of 1,742 articles.² Very few articles in the 1970s used this term in any discussion, and between the years 1980 and 1990 only 72 articles could be found. A resurgence in the use of this word was seen in the 1990s, and by 2003, 1,195 articles could be found referencing hipsters.³ Arsel Zeynep and Craig Thompson believe that these numbers correspond to a media invented hipster myth, and does not correlate to a true hipster subculture.

In the article “Demythologizing Consumption Practices: How Consumers Protect Their Field-Dependent Identity Investments From Devaluing Marketplace Myths,” Zeynep and Thompson, believe that the modern hipster is no more than a myth that companies have generated through an appropriation of the indie subculture. They believe that the use of the word ‘hipster’ is an aberration of indie subculture, and outliers within this group are those that society mistakes for

¹ Lorentzen, Christian, “I Was Wrong” in *What Was the Hipster?* ed. Mark Greif, Kathleen Ross, and Dayna Tortorici (New York: n+1 Foundation, 2010), 14.

² Arsel Zeynep and Craig J. Thompson, “Demythologizing Consumption Practices: How Consumers Protect Their Field-Dependent Identity Investments from Devaluing Marketplace Myths,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 37, no 5. (2011), 794.

³ Ibid., 795.

hipster. This article's analysis of hipster is strictly from a marketing and economic standpoint, the main body of study relying on consumption practices and cultural capital as commodity. Subculture, though, is not just a series of economic choices which fashion, music, and trends are the key cultural artifacts and tenets of a group of people. It is how these commodities are used in subculture that aid in the formation of the subculture, delineating it from mainstream culture.⁴

Cultural authority plays a key role in Zeynep and Thompson's argument of demythologizing hipsters. Informants entrenched in Indie subculture rail against the term hipsters, and argue that hipsters are only those who wish to emulate and acquire the Indie subculture. Amy and Scarlett are two informants who

both possess cultural authority—owing to their expert forms of cultural capital and occupational positions in the indie music scene—to differentiate the meanings of their legitimate consumption styles from the popularized and commercialized styles of the hipster.⁵

These informants show a commodification and a classist hierarchy based on cultural currency within the indie subculture. These gatekeepers of knowledge and inclusion, decide who is Indie and who is not, and as such, their group becomes exclusionary. Those that wish for inclusion within this subculture must self identify and forage, finding their own path to the inner circle. The hipster, according to Zeynep and Thompson, is nothing more than a caricature of faux pas'

⁴ Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen & Co LTD, 1979),103.

⁵ Zeynep and Thompson, "Demythologizing Consumption Practices," 799.

potential indie members make, before acceptance within the inner circle of this subculture. Members who may emulate hipster qualities “must grapple with the discomfiting prospect that they could, at any time, mirror the hipster caricature through an inadvertent miscue in their expression of indie tastes.”⁶ If this is true then these fledgling members who lack cultural authority conduct a tightrope walk, where one potential fashion mistake may place them in a purgatory of hipsterism.

While Zeynep and Thompson argue that hipster is nothing more than a lampoon of those attempting to navigate the trends of indie subculture, author Christian Lorentzen denounces the existence of hipsters, explaining his misgivings on the subject in his article “I Was Wrong.” Lorentzen, who is the senior editor for *Harper’s*, also wrote the article “Why the Hipster Must Die,” showing his attachment to this subject. Lorentzen gives ten points, in his article “I Was Wrong,” which he asks for reconciliation on his role in enabling a ‘hipster’ fiction which persisted due to the media’s involvement. Lorentzen argues emphatically that hipsters do not exist,

I am not now nor have I ever been a hipster. No member of my family, no close friend, no enemy, no rival, no lover, no teacher, no coworker, no classmate, no bandmate, no client, no barkeep, no dance partner, no party guest, no doctor, no lawyer, no broker, no banker, no artist, no singer, no guitar player, no DJ, no model, no photographer, no author, no editor, no pilot, no stewardess, no actor, no actress, no television personality, no robber, no

⁶ Zeynep and Thompson, “Demythologizing Consumption Practices,” 800.

cop, no priest, no deacon, no nun, no hooker, no pimp, no acquaintance known to me has ever been a hipster. I deny that there ever existed any such thing. I deny this categorically, and I denounce the very category. I despise it.⁷

The ten points Lorentzen argues has a tongue-in-cheek quality, as he vehemently attacks statements he previously made, attempting to retract his own involvement and role in the perpetuation of a mythical, nonexistent, hipster subculture. Lorentzen's comments border on sardonic wit, as in one section he posits that racism had died out in the 1990s and anything reconciled as racism is just "nostalgia for a naughty past."⁸

Race is not the only issue in which Lorentzen seems to gloss over, as he mocks other social and economic issues that are prevalent in today's society, in his attempt to eviscerate the hipster subculture. Class becomes a laughable topic to discuss in relation to the hipster aesthetic. Addressing this issue in relationship to hipsters, Lorentzen adopts a very elitist and self-important view on economic disparity and class structure in America. He decides to wipe clean all belief that a class structure even exists,

as we all know, there is no such thing as a class structure in America. While there may be blind disparities among us in terms of wealth and status, we the people, as our founding documents mandate, are all created equal, we enjoy equal opportunities, and by the time we reach the age of 25, no matter the circumstances of our birth, we all enjoy the same

⁷ Lorentzen, "I Was Wrong," 14.

⁸ Ibid., 19.

level of attractiveness to the opposite sex, which on a scale of one to ten, would be a seven.⁹

Again Lorentzen seems to polarize a very complex discussion of social issues in America, reducing it down to one simple point, the level of attractiveness to the opposite sex. This jocular and satirization of the topics at hand, does not address why he believes hipsters do not exist. Lorentzen's argument borders on mockery as he callously shreds the beliefs and opinions of others. That the hipster subculture does not exist is argued in his article, but very little evidence is given to support this theory. While Lorentzen outright denies the existence of hipsters, author Sophy Bot analyzes the changing world we live in, trying to identify the true hipster from the chaff.

Self-published author, Sophy Bot, addresses the complex issue of the hipster in her book, *The Hipster Effect*. Bot, after leaving her job in Mid-Town Manhattan and her marriage of five years, found herself living in a loft apartment building, a converted sewing factory in Bushwick, Brooklyn, a well known hipster locale. This building, a location for bohemians and artists, was a setting where they wished "to secede from Brooklyn in protest of 'destructive economic forces.'"¹⁰ Bot describes her living arrangements as co-habitation with Bohemian's who embody cool, which was lost to a different time and era. Bot is not convinced

⁹ Lorentzen, "I Was Wrong," 19.

¹⁰ Sophy Bot, *The Hipster Effect*, (Self Published, 2012), 18.

of the hipster subculture and moniker given to the group of which she lives, and is confounded by the hipster enigma.

Analyzing the advancement of technology, social media, the new ideas surrounding work, and the blurring of lines between workplace and home, Bot comes to the conclusion that hipsters are not as large a group as people believe them to be, and comes down on the side of hipsters are less likely to exist. Creating an invented past, Bot uses the argument that there was a greater level of authenticity amongst previous subcultures, using fashion choices as uniform to illustrate this point, “Back in the day, people knew exactly what it meant to wear a pair of Vans sneakers—it meant you were a skater.”¹¹ Using skate culture, Bot argues that items held significant meaning toward a subculture for previous generations, such as Van sneakers, but that items appropriated by hipsters today lack authenticity and meaning due to a changing environment, in which there are no shared set of universal meanings connected to the clothing they wear. The conclusion of this book is indecisive and does not truly give an argument based on the evidence presented. Like others who argue against a hipster subculture, the evidence garnered are only outward identifiers of self-display. That is not the case for every writer and disputer of the hipster subculture. Some, just outright loathe their counterculture aesthetic.

The title of the article overtly describes the author’s beliefs, “Hipster: The Dead End of Western Civilization,” and when Douglas Haddow wrote this piece,

¹¹ Bot, *The Hipster Effect*, 153.

he truly argued this with a passion. This article describes hipsters as nothing more than shallow, vacuous, youths who are self obsessed and self involved, “a youth subculture that mirrors the doomed shallowness of mainstream society.”¹² Like other authors who have analyzed the hipster subculture, Haddow attacks fashion choices and fixed-gear-bikes trying to illustrate the vanity that he believes hipster to be steeped in. Using Lorentzen as his authority on hipsters, he argues they are nothing more than zombies who follow marketers and style, but another cultural authority on the topic, Gavin McInnes, founder of *Vice* magazine, has a different opinion on this issue. McInnes believes that it is bloggers and other writers who have created this doubt and feeling of disdain about the hipster subculture, and they are projecting jealousy because “...they’re just so mad at these young kids for going out getting wasted and having fun and being fashionable.”¹³ But that is not the issue Haddow sees with hipsters as a counterculture or subculture. His opinion runs deeper than just fashion.

It has been said by more than one writer, that hipsters do not emulate cool or hipness, but instead consume it, and end up being invented rather than inventing their own subculture. Haddow believes that hipsters are the first counterculture to be manipulated by the advertising industry. As they find new cultural trends, which are then appropriated by mainstream culture, they must

¹² Douglass Haddow, “The Dead End of Western Civilization,” *Adjusters*, July 29, 2008, <https://www.adbusters.org/magazine/79/hipster.html>

¹³ Ibid.

shift away to find the new unknown, the new hip thing. In arguing this, Haddow notes, “hipsters cannot afford to maintain any cultural loyalties or affiliations for fear they will lose relevance.”¹⁴ In analyzing the culture of consumption with Harley Davidson Motorcycle subcultures, professors of marketing, John W. Schouten and James H. McAlexander, found that this practice is not uncommon, and that subcultural groups will adjust to outside influences of marketing practices to insulate their subcultural group. They note in their article “...brand management is faced with a veritable tightrope walk between the conflicting needs of two disparate but equally important groups of consumers: those who give the product its mystique and those who give the company in profitability.”¹⁵ While industries have appropriated hipster, making it fashionable, and mainstream, this is only a doppelgänger of their subculture, a mirror image reflecting back at them with a distorted view of their beliefs. To call someone part of a subculture, only analyzing what they wear, is to ignore individual choice that plays a role in all decisions made. But, it is hard to differentiate between authentic and pseudo. When media creates caricatures of groups, taking the loudest characteristics and blending them together to create an amalgamation of all things hipster, no matter what the meanings are behind each different cultural

¹⁴ Haddow, “The Dead End of Western Civilization.”

¹⁵ John W. Schouten and James H. McAlexander, “Subcultures of Consumption: An Ethnography of the New Bikers,” *Journal of Consumer Research, Inc.* 22, no.1 (1995): 58-59.

artifact, they invent something superficial. And that is where the media invented hipster and the hipster subculture differ.

Commodification of Hipster

The hipster subculture has fought an uphill battle for identity throughout much of its existence, as their character has been appropriated by mainstream culture, leaving behind the hipster's aesthetic. This mimicry created confusion, and as a result, society began to view the hipster as businesses, such as Urban Outfitters and American Apparel, portrayed them. Much like the commodification of the hippie countercultural movement of the sixties and the punk rockers of the late seventies and early eighties, we find the same occurrence with the hipster subculture, and as a result, the difference between the hipster subculture and commodified hipster look becomes obfuscated.

Urban Outfitters is known to be quite a controversial clothing company that targets a hipster audience. This company was founded in 1970 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and has targeted an urban audience, focusing their attention to developing stores in major cities throughout the world. The main focus and attention of their company is fashion for a bohemian and hipster aesthetic, attaching the word hipster to many clothing items, while selling other kitschy home goods and accessories for the city dweller's everyday life. This company has seen many different fashion faux pas' in the last five years, with public outrage causing the removal of such clothes from their catalog. Described

as a store that “caters to the ‘mainstream hipsters,’ an oxymoron, but a truthful one,” Urban Outfitters seems to push the envelope of taste in main stream society, hoping to be a company which shows a rebellious side.¹⁶ By creating controversial clothing which goes against cultural norms, their goal is to seem attractive to the hipster aesthetic of cultural dissent and opposition to dominant culture, but there is a fine line between a rebellious nature, cultural dissent, and blatant disregard for people’s sensibilities.

Urban Outfitters, in trying to capture and commodify rebellion, has found itself mired in many controversies in which their insult and mockery has not equated to cultural dissent. In 2010, Urban Outfitters released a t-shirt, targeted at women, with the slogan “Eat Less” emblazoned across the front. Their website advertised this shirt mocking eating disorders, “Eat less or more or however much you'd like in this seriously soft knit tee cut long and topped with a v-neck,”¹⁷ and was removed amidst the controversy. This was not the end of controversy for this company, and two years later, Urban Outfitters found itself again, apologizing for controversial merchandise.

At the beginning of 2012 the Navajo Nation brought a lawsuit against Urban Outfitters for appropriating, without permission, Navajo inspired clothing

¹⁶ Melanie Wilcox, “Urban Outfitters and the Mainstream Hipster,” *Acculturated*, February 4, 2014, <http://acculturated.com/urban-outfitters-and-the-mainstream-hipster/>

¹⁷ Benjamin Snyder, “Urban Outfitters’ Kent State Sweatshirt and 7 Other Controversial Clothes,” *Fortune*, September 15, 2014, <http://fortune.com/2014/09/15/urbans-kent-state-sweatshirt-and-7-other-controversial-clothes/>

and items, and using the name “Navajo” in advertising their products. It was not only that this company was in violation of ten different registered trademarks the tribe holds, but the way this culturally recognized pattern was applied so liberally to merchandise, became insult to the Navajo Nation. Among the many items that caused the public to cringe were flasks and undergarments, adorned with such patterns. The tribe noted that Urban Outfitters “line of Navajo-branded clothing and accessories — particularly underwear and a liquor flask, which the tribe said was ‘derogatory and scandalous,’ considering the sale and consumption of alcohol is banned on the reservation that spans parts of northeast Arizona, southeast Utah and northwest New Mexico.”¹⁸

If the appropriation and exploitation of the Navajo Nation’s cultural identity wasn’t enough controversy for Urban Outfitters, they proceeded to mock the Kent State shootings in 1970. In mid 2014 Urban Outfitters began the sale of a faded pink, vintage Kent State sweatshirt, with what appeared to be blood-splatter across the front and bullet holes. Only one sweatshirt was sold before this insensitive item was withdrawn amidst controversy from their stores and online merchandise. Urban Outfitters regretfully apologized saying their company was not referencing the tragic shootings that occurred in 1970, and that the sweatshirt was a one-of-a-kind, with red stains and frayed holes, due to the vintage nature of

¹⁸ Felicia Fonseca, “Navajo Nation Sues Urban Outfitters Over Goods,” [NBCNews.com](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/46574519/ns/business-retail/t/navajo-nation-sues-urban-outfitters-over-goods/#.VZJ_EmBvbzJ), February 29, 2012, http://www.nbcnews.com/id/46574519/ns/business-retail/t/navajo-nation-sues-urban-outfitters-over-goods/#.VZJ_EmBvbzJ

the object and sun-fading.¹⁹ These instances discussed, amongst many others, have plagued this company over the last five years, with many fashion experts believing these faux pas' are willfully perpetrated to keep their name attached to a brand of cultural dissent. But, if there is another company that claims to be a hipster company, and has a far worse reputation than Urban Outfitters, that would be American Apparel.

In 1989 Dov Charney founded American Apparel, a clothing company which purported to have a conscience. Unlike other clothing companies that shipped the production of their goods over seas, many times being accused of perpetuating the sweatshop in looking for unrealistic, cheap clothing, Charney kept his clothing production in the United States. American Apparel touted itself as a socially conscientious company who paid its workers a decent wage, and refused to use sweatshop clothing.²⁰ In fact, every process of the manufacturing of clothing is controlled by American Apparel. When 2,000 workers in their Los Angeles factory were found to be illegal immigrants, during a raid in 2009, Charney saw this as a social issue which needed to be addressed, noting "We

¹⁹ Erika Adams, "Kent State Responds to Urban Outfitters' Distasteful Sweatshirt," *Racked*, September 15th, 2014, <http://www.racked.com/2014/9/15/7576871/urban-outfitters-kent-state-sweatshirt>

²⁰ Maxine Shen, "T-shirts As Far As the Eye Can See," *New York Post*, March 24, 2004, <http://nypost.com/2004/03/20/t-shirts-as-far-as-the-eye-can-see/>

have a broken immigration system in the United States.”²¹ All this would lead one to believe American Apparel is a very moral, upright company, shying away from Urban Outfitters’ devil be damned attitude. Many believe this company caters to a hipster sensibility of global conscientiousness and anti-capitalism, believing they are a company representing the hipster subculture. Instead, when analyzing American Apparel, you find a darker side that exploits the feminine form with overt sexuality commodifying the female body.

The old adage, ‘sex sells,’ is apparently what American Apparel’s motto must be in the promotion of clothing, and Dov Charney’s personal maxim. By 2012 Dov Charney had multiple lawsuits pending against him through workplace sexual harassment claims, and one sex slave lawsuit.²² It is not only Dov Charney though, that perpetuated a hipster sexuality through his company, but the marketing department as well, which oozed from every page of advertising. American Apparel commodifies the female form and hyper sexualizes women in advertisements, selling sex more than clothing. Many of their advertisements are compared to a “1970s porn aesthetic,” and have been met with much controversy, in many countries being banned.²³ With most of their advertisements reminiscent

²¹ Jane Wells, “American Apparel CEO: Tattered, but Not Torn,” *CNBC*, April 10, 2012, http://www.cnbc.com/id/47007775/American_Apparel_CEO_Tattered_but_Not_Torn

²² Ibid.

²³ Elizabeth Segren, “The Fall of the Hipster Brand: Inside the Decline of American Apparel and Urban Outfitters, March 3rd, 2015, <http://www.racked.com/2015/3/3/8134987/american-apparel-urban-outfitters-hipster-brands>

more of the beginning pages of a playboy centerfold, where the model is still scantily clad with few bits of clothing, American Apparel sells sex, rather than clothing.

American Apparel advertising has purposely created controversy with overtly sexual advertisements in which the female form is objectified. Eliana Dockterman, writer for Time Magazine, noted that there has been much controversy over these advertisement campaigns, and American Apparel has been accused “of stoking Lolita fantasies, perpetuating sexism through objectification and pedaling underage soft-core porn.”²⁴ While this was in response of their most recent advertisement that was banned in the UK, due to the only image on the advertisement being an up-the-skirt photo, of a young woman’s panties, while wearing a plaid mini-skirt—which many have said harkened back to high school days, blurring the lines between appropriate age of consent—this was not their most controversial campaign. Glancing through American Apparels advertising archives online leads the viewer to a distinct hypothesis that this company tends to focus on women as objects of sexual fantasy with a hyper-sexualization attached to each photo. With the poses chosen for these women, and the suggestive nature of the advertising, American Apparel seems to purposely court controversy on a sexual level, breaking away from mainstream values, and dissenting against the views society deems acceptable. But if Dov Charney sees

²⁴ Eliana Dockterman, “American Apparel Scandals Have Gotten Boring,” *Time*, August 11, 2014, <http://time.com/3100552/american-apparel-plaid-miniskirt-underage-lolita/>

societies views on advertising as puritanical or prudish, society views his as pornographic and sexist, with many noting that only women are treated this way in advertisements, while the majority of the time men remain clothed or are completely absent from any of their photos. So if the hipster subculture is a group that is self aware about society and their place within it, why then are they attached to such a heinous corporation that does nothing but commodify women's bodies?²⁵

Both Urban Outfitters and American Apparel sought to court controversy, believing it would attract a hipster subculture. While both these companies attract a demographic of 18 to 25 year olds, they have failed to understand that a company cannot package and commodify aesthetic, only the uniform of such. A result of this comes the prepackaged hipster, and as Segren notes, it becomes a "watered-down appropriation" of their fashion in which "you could pop into Urban Outfitters to buy a faded T-shirt from an obscure band, a pocket watch and Victorian pinstripe trousers. You could walk out of American Apparel with a leotard and '80s spandex shorts."²⁶ While Williamsburg resident Daniel Bernardo dresses as if he shops at Urban Outfitters, he was shocked to see people wearing the same outfit he wore, which he handpicked and farmed from one vintage shop to the next, sometimes taking months to purchase the clothes which he felt

²⁵ American Apparel, Advertising Archive, <https://www.americanapparel.net/presscenter/adarchive/>

²⁶ Segren, "The Fall of the Hipster Brand."

reflected his individuality. Bernardo, frustrated at this appropriation which lacked the aesthetic behind his choices noted, “Our outfits were all about being true to ourselves and not spending too much money on clothes, but suddenly you could pick up an outfit that looked vintage but that had never been worn before.”²⁷ Voicing his frustration at clothing stores like American Apparel and Urban Outfitters, Bernardo draws distinction between hipsters and their penchant for creating an outfit through discovery, versus stores appropriating these outfits seen on hipsters, and then commodifying this look.

The quickest outward identifier of a subculture is the uniform, outfits which society identifies as belonging to a particular group. Urban Outfitters and American Apparel sought to capture the essence of the hipster and package it, reselling to a populace which lacked the aesthetic reasons behind wearing those outfits. While populations in Williamsburg, Brooklyn and Portland, Maine shopped at vintage clothing stores—which grew in numbers in these areas— they searched not just for clothing, but for authenticity and nostalgia of a past which, was much like an Instagram photo, large grained, washed out, a vintaged polaroid. Schouten and McAlexander, during their ethnographic research on countercultural bike gangs, observed that when the company Harley Davidson appropriated and commodified specific elements, symbols, and aspects of the outlaw groups, a tension occurred between these groups. The attempts by a company to appropriate elements of subculture for commercial gain, and “by

²⁷ Segren, “The Fall of the Hipster Brand.”

broadening its appeal may have a deadly corrupting influence on the subculture itself.”²⁸ This widespread access to products which are cultural artifacts within a subculture, begins to blur the lines of identity, destroying part of what made these groups contrast against mainstream society.

Urban Outfitters and American Apparel has essentially created a caricature of a hipster, and this aids the media invention that differs from the hipster subculture. Like Dr. Frankenstein’s monster, cobbled together from different pieces, animated yet empty, lacking purpose, lacking a soul, so too does the ‘hipster,’ which these clothing companies have invented. Like Melanie Wilcox notes in her article on Urban Outfitters’ business practices, this company seeks a mainstream hipster, which is then not a hipster. Its lack of understanding of this subculture is apparent and vainglorious in how it flaunts an invented image, while trying to capture the attention of a group which does not like any product that overtly advertises to them. Executive director, Kevin Lyons, of Urban Outfitters, illustrates the companies lack of understanding of this subculture by identifying hipsters in the same way many do, “The kid who has a band, anybody who has a band is our customer. I’m dead straight on that. And the girl who has not realized that quirky is sexy and that being a hipster is not simply a marketing tool, it’s someone that just does something differently than others.”²⁹ Ignoring beliefs like countercultural, oppositional, and dissenting behavior, Lyons shows he doesn’t

²⁸ Schouten and McAlexander, “Subcultures of Consumption,” 58.

²⁹ Wilcox, “Urban Outfitters and the Mainstream Hipster.”

understand the subculture he directly markets his products at, and shows the caricature his company has invented are kids with bands or quirky girls which can be sexy.

Many people believe the hipster is nothing but a constructed identity of consumption patterns, aka consumers of cool, of hip, a group of people identified only through their consumption patterns. This belief can be argued through the use of Schouten and McAlexander's 1995 study on the Harley Davidson subculture—their research being pivotal on this subject of subcultures surrounding consumption practices. Through their research they identify subcultures of consumption, and their genesis

...comes into existence as people identify with certain objects or consumption activities and, through those objects or activities, identity with other people. The unifying consumption patterns are governed by a unique ethos or set of common values. The structure of the subculture, which governs social interactions within it, and which we now address, is a direct reflection of the commitment of individuals to the ethos.³⁰

As many hipsters have discussed, the fashion and outfits express individuality, and the hunt for clothing through second hand stores, moves forward an ethos of authenticity, nostalgia, and responsible, environmentally friendly ethics—recycling or reusing clothing which otherwise might have been thrown out. But the existence of their subculture does not revolve around this single identity like the Harley Davidson subculture of consumption, and instead their consumption

³⁰ Schouten and McAlexander, "Subcultures of Consumption," 48.

practices are a series of decisions based on an ethos of responsible living, individuality, and anti-consumerist practices. Shopping at vintage stores is anti-consumerist and anti-globalization, since those clothes have found their way from the backs of previous owners to stores right on Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn and Free Street, Portland. This is why Urban Outfitters and American Apparel represent a media invented hipster, which they have helped shape and mold, a hollow vessel which they have filled from scouting out hipster-centric locales. And like all people, we progress with time, and so do our tastes and our beliefs, refining as we age.

A clothing company can market a look, but they cannot exude beliefs and sell them, as if they were crammed inside a bottle hanging from the clothing, neatly packaged so all one must do is pull the cork, and the meanings of that subcultural uniform oozes out. As the hipster subculture has advanced with time, the beliefs that lay hidden deep beneath the surface of every clothing choice, every artisanal food product, every item steeped in authenticity has amalgamated to what we find today. Segran noted that hipster subculture "...has become much more about internalizing a set of ideals about how to live ethically, rather than simply rejecting everything mainstream."³¹ Brenna Erlich and Andrea Bartz, in their book *Stuff Hipsters Hate: A Field Guide to the Passionate Opinions of the Indifferent* note that hipsters shop at unconventional locations like flea markets or relatives attics and closets to cobble together outfits which reflect their

³¹ Segran, "The Fall of the Hipster Brand."

individuality. More importantly though, Erlich and Bartz, note “While scenesters occasionally indulge in the faux-vintage of Urban Outfitters and American Apparel, hipsters turn up their bespectacled noses at such lemming-esque behavior.”³²

American Apparel and Urban Outfitters, in trying to capture cool, and market such, created a caricature of what society viewed as the hipster. This media invention mimicked many of the clothing choices of the hipster subculture, but lacked the aesthetic beliefs behind a yearning for authenticity and the ethical decisions behind purchasing from second hand vintage clothing stores. It is through the creation and marketing of these fashions that these clothing companies helped invent and further the belief of the media created hipster, which was a hollow shell lacking the views of cultural dissent, anti-consumerism, anti-capitalism, and oppositional characteristics which the hipster subculture gravitates towards. As Schouten and McAlexander showed, subcultures of consumption must rally around an item which the subculture then builds an ethos off of those products, such as the Harley Davidson motorcycle groups. The hipster subculture does not show this characteristic, due to their ethos being a larger coalescence of beliefs, which do not focus on one specific consumer product. As Melanie Wilcox noted, “true hipsters don’t shop at Urban.”³³

³² Brenna Erlich and Andrea Bartz, *Stuff Hipsters Hate: A Field Guide to the Passionate Opinions of the Indifferent*, (Berkeley: Ulysses Press, 2010), 64.

³³ Wilcox, “Urban Outfitters and the Mainstream Hipster.”

A Firm Belief

There is much debate on the existence of a hipster subculture. Many believe it is nothing more than a fashion style perpetuated by media outlets, lacking substance as a subculture. Many detractors discuss hipsters with a disdain that borders on hatred and loathing, and even use the word “hipster” as an insult bandied around, insinuating the person is shallow, self-absorbed, and obnoxious. There are those that believe the hipster is a subculture, and that there are merits to this collective of individuals. Mark Greif is one of those individuals.

When Mark Greif organized a symposium in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York, a recognized hipster locale by numerous magazines, newspapers, and travel guides, he sought to flesh out the existence of the hipster subculture. The Observer online news source covered this event, where “about 100 attendees packed the Eugene Lang Center for a ridiculously wide-ranging discussion of hipster culture...”³⁴ Greif, an assistant professor of literary studies at Eugene Lang College, argues there is a hipster subculture, and should be studied before this phenomenon subsides. Aside from the book *What Was the Hipster? A Sociological Investigation*, Greif had also written other articles on the

³⁴ Reid Pillifant, “Hipsters Die Another Death at n+1 Panel,” *The Observer*, April 13, 2009, <http://observer.com/2009/04/hipsters-die-another-death-at-n1-panel-people-called-hipsters-just-happened-to-be-young-and-more-often-than-not-funnylooking/>

hipster subculture. Grief sees the importance in recording this subculture now while they are still a coherent group. He chose to seek out meaning and understanding of this socially conscious, oppositional group, while they are still a subculture, before they are scattered to obscurity of time.

If anyone had analyzed hipsters as much as Zeynep and Thompson, it is Mark Greif. In his article “What Was the Hipster?”—written for *New York* magazine—Greif analyzes all aspects of a subculture in the analysis of hipsters. Creating a timeline, the reader gets a sense of the development of this subculture and how it formed its identity along the way. Art is discussed and artists are identified not just as hipster, but catering to a demographic of hipsters, from movies to music to art, all genres analyzed and discussed, showing how each helps form the hipster identity. Arguing that hipsters are not just a static group that focuses on one aesthetic, one belief, Greif acknowledges that the hipster subculture can and does modify itself as society does as well. From earlier “white” period, in which hipsters fetishized redneck white-trash culture, they found themselves later as “green” hipsters, finding a connection with nature, or as Greif puts it, “Hipster Primitive.” This article does not analyze the hipster based solely on consumption patterns like so many other authors have done. The importance behind the elements and cultural artifacts of the hipster subculture is examined,

and as a result, there is discussion on how these help in shaping the identity of the hipster.³⁵

James Panero, writer for the *New York Daily News*, does not just acknowledge and believe the hipster is more than just a media invented stereotype, but believes they are the vanguards of entrepreneurship with an ethical edge. In his article, “Hail to the Hipsters,” Panero writes about this subculture with a zeal and passion for their exploits as entrepreneurs resurrecting individuality and artisanal crafts in New York City. Highlighting one of many stereotypes people use to stigmatize the hipster subculture Panero notes

What’s less known about hipsters is that they are busy saving New York. They’re not the lazy trust-fund brats of stereotype but the entrepreneurs of an amazing resilient city economy. The next time you see one, think twice before scoffing; he or she just might be your next employer.³⁶

The trust-fund brat stereotype, that Panero rebuts, is a common cliché that is attached to many hipsters. Brushing aside this common belief, this article notes the hardworking aesthetic and the different approaches the hipster subculture is taking in maintaining authenticity, with the development of boutique and artisanal products. Although Panero uses identifiers of self display—such as facial

³⁵Mark Greif, “What Was the Hipster?” *New York*, October 24, 2010, <http://nymag.com/news/features/69129/>

³⁶ James Panero, “Hail to the hipsters,” *New York Daily News*, June 24th, 2012. <http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/hail-hipsters-article-1.1100963>

hair and clothing—to help one visualize and identify the hipster, he focuses on their efforts to create businesses and work in a capitalist society.

While Panero discusses the hipster subculture's relationship to capitalism, he believes the hipster is not anti-capitalist, but instead works as classic capitalists. Panero sees the hipster as an entrepreneur with their beliefs and ideals attached to their business practices noting, "hipsters are classical capitalists, opposed to both big business and big government."³⁷ Discussing the many unique and different businesses which exists in Brooklyn, New York, Panero illustrates the aesthetic that hipsters have created from their entrepreneurial spirit. The expression, "très Brooklyn" is known in Paris in reference to hipster-style food trucks that now populate this city, and the label, "'Made in Brooklyn' is a mark of quality for food the way 'Made in Italy' once was for clothing."³⁸ Panero though, isn't the only writer to gush over the hipster subculture and their contribution to a cities economy and true artisanal practices.

Adam Davidson, writer for the New York Times, agrees with Panero's views on this topic, and discusses the hipster in relationship to artisanal goods. In his article "Don't Mock the Artisanal Pickle Maker's," published in the *New York Times*, Davidson discusses the contributions the hipster subculture is making to capitalism, and argues that their craft production is the new model for 21st century capitalists. Davidson argues that it is through the act of specialization that

³⁷ Panero, "Hail to the Hipster."

³⁸ Ibid.

hipsters adhere to the tenets of capitalist Adam Smith, and in doing so “...become guides to the future of the American Economy.”³⁹ The hipsters’ anti-capitalist views work in opposition, to what Davidson notes as, “excesses of our industrial era,” and it is by working against capitalism, rejecting the current ideas of mass production and industrialization, that the hipster subculture maintains the convictions of anti-capitalism.⁴⁰

While Davidson and Panero believe that the hipster subculture is not anti-capitalist, but instead adhere to tenets of traditional capitalism, they forget to analyze that as individuals, they have no choice but to exist within a capitalist system. To remove oneself from capitalism, in a capitalist country, is impossible. Taxes must be paid on property, food and clothing must be bought, and this is all required through earning money, which requires participation in a capitalist system. The hipster, in maintaining a specialized and artisanal business aesthetic maintains control of their product, and produces items that they have beliefs behind. It is through this control, that the hipster rejects current capitalist dogma and retains their identity, forced to participate in a system they reject. It is on their own terms that the hipster subculture engages in capitalism, and as a result, they manipulate the system to fit within their aesthetic.

³⁹ Adam Davidson, “Don’t Mock the Artisanal Pickle Makers,” *The New York Times Magazine*, February 15, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/19/magazine/adam-davidson-craft-business.html>

⁴⁰ Ibid.

There are many arguments in relationship to the existence of the hipster subculture. While some believe the subculture exists, others believe that it is nothing more than a media invented and perpetuated caricature only to sell fashionable goods. Others believe that the hipster is nothing more than a spin off of Indie subculture, a bastardization of this collective group which forms its identity off of obscure music. Some in society view the hipster as nothing more than an empty vessel, which Urban Outfitters and American Apparel shape in their own marketed image, while others believe the hipster subculture has substance, and instead elements of their group have been appropriated and commodified by media and commercial industries to make money in a capitalist system, lacking all aesthetic from which hipsters form their identity.

Those believing the hipster subculture is a solid group with beliefs and values, notice their contribution to the urban community of which they live, as 'social' entrepreneurs, shaping their neighborhoods as active participants within their locale. Adam Davidson and James Panero believe that the hipster maneuvers through a capitalist system which they have no choice but to navigate through. Instead of falling in step with this system, the hipster subculture seems to form their own values and ethos in response to capitalism, forming businesses which become highly specialized, finding niches for their unique and quirky businesses. The hipster subculture embeds their identity beliefs through their business practices, and instead of becoming a subculture of consumption, they become a subculture with values and beliefs that stretch past purchase habits. As the hipster

subculture becomes entrenched in their urban environments, their entrepreneurial spirit inadvertently leads to something more sinister. As a result of this, the hipster subculture is an unwitting accomplice to the process of gentrification.

Chapter 3

The Unwitting Foot Soldiers of Gentrification:

Hipsters as New Retail Entrepreneurs

The small business is the idealized social form of our time. Our culture hero is not the artist or reformer, not the saint or scientist, but the entrepreneur. (Think of Steve Jobs, our new deity.) Autonomy, adventure, imagination: entrepreneurship comprehends all this and more for us. The characteristic art form of our age may be the business plan.

“Generation Sell” William Deresiewicz, *New York Times*, November 12, 2011

The landscapes of Portland, Maine, and Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York, have changed considerably in the last fifteen years. Both cities—Brooklyn being a borough of New York City—have seen slow growth and economic development within their boundaries, along with demographic changes. These areas are now witnessing fast growth and development, occurring in only the last five years. Currently, these two locations are being promoted as experiencing the effects of gentrification—sometimes in not so positive a light. With gentrification occurring in both locations, and many other areas that are considered hipster locales, this occurrence cannot be brushed aside as mere coincidence. But, if the hipsters helped usher in gentrification, it seems to be unwittingly, and as a result, in trying

to capture and manipulate the landscape of their urban environment, they essentially laid the seeds for further development, outside the realm of their control.

Two Hipster Cities: Portland and Williamsburg

Walk down the streets of Portland, Maine or Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York, and you will notice a plethora of boutiques, coffee shops, artisanal goods, quirky unique bars, and craft breweries and distilleries. Along with all this, art galleries are wedged between burger bars and yarn shops, while across the street, music venues painted flat black with blood red doors—the windows painted over as well—give the casual passerby the impression of vacant retail space. If looking for rhyme or reason behind this, you will find none. In Portland, Maine, the Old Port section of the city used to be the central location for bars and nightlife, now popular bars stretch from one end of the city to the other, many tucked in small alcoves and basements, easily ignored by untrained eye. In the past, these two cities have been voted as the top ten hipster cities in the United States, but what does that mean to be a hipster city? In reality, the city becomes a hipster city, because of the new retail entrepreneur, aka, the hipster who finds a niche in that economy.

Williamsburg is a small neighborhood in the borough of Brooklyn, New York City, encompassing 2.179 square miles, hosting a population of 126,183 residents. The neighborhood gets its name from the Williamsburg Bridge which it

is nestled against, while part of it rests against the East River—known, at one time, as one of the dirtiest rivers in the United States. This area of Brooklyn was once known for its industrial area, with breweries and factories that manufactured products such as sugar, textiles, mustard, shoes, guitars, and chemicals. Williamsburg was in a post-industrial phase when artists and bohemian's began to swarm the area in the 1990s, paying cheap prices to rent sections of old factories for housing, art installations, and workshops for artisanal goods. The demographics of the area, at this time, were mainly people of Polish and Latino descent, a blue collared working class area, with a high crime rate. At the time, there was very little incentive for the casual observer to purposely wander into this neighborhood.¹

Three hundred miles northeast, Portland, Maine has seen a large economic resurgence in the last fifteen years as well, with revitalization beginning in the mid-1980s and taking off between 1990 and 2000. The city of Portland rests upon the shores of Casco Bay with a total land area of 21.31 square miles, and a population of 66,318, making up five percent of the population in the state. The city is bordered by the town of Falmouth to the north, the City of Westbrook to the west, and the City of South Portland to the south—all reside within Cumberland County. Cumberland counties population in 2013 was 285,456 making it the most populous county in the state of Maine. A multitude of islands sit within the

¹ [city-data.com, http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Williamsburg-Brooklyn-NY.html](http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Williamsburg-Brooklyn-NY.html)

boundaries of Portland's municipality, seven of these islands being sizable enough to have homes and communities on them, almost all of which are served by the Casco Bay Ferry Lines.²

Both Williamsburg and Portland were once economically driven by industry, but are now focused on a growing tourist based economy with food, bars, and culture fronting this trend. The success of their tourism industry is based on a multitude of reasons. Portland's close proximity to Boston makes this an ideal location for quick weekend travel, and the harbor itself, which can accommodate large cargo ships, is perfect for cruise ship traffic, with 60 cruise ships visiting Portland in 2013. Williamsburg has inadvertently become a tourist destination, which, being titled the "epicenter of cool," has attracted a wide range of tourist groups entering its neighborhoods for weekend travel. As a boutique owner and resident of Williamsburg noted, "Weekdays [the customers] are more locals, but weekends here it's full of tourists visiting..."³ Rubulad, an underground party of music venues and free spirited costumed party goers and art installations, put Williamsburg on the 2007 Blue List of the revered Lonely Planet travel guide, touting this neighborhood as "the hippest part of New York City."⁴ Although

² United States Census Bureau Quick facts Cumberland county <http://maine.quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/23/23005.html>

³ Sharon Zukin, "New Retail Capital and Neighborhood Change: Boutiques and Gentrification in New York City," *City & Community* 8, no. 1, (2009): 62.

⁴ Sharon Zukin, *Naked City*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010): 37.

Williamsburg does not tout itself as a tourist destination, it has become one, where those wishing for a dose of cool or hipness find themselves drawn.

The New Retail Entrepreneur

Portland, Maine and Williamsburg, Brooklyn owe part of their recent economic success to contributions the hipster subculture has made to their communities. It is through this entrepreneurial spirit and economic drive that has created an environment of quirky, unique, and individualistic stores, which attracts in crowds of tourists and the casual observer to these areas. The hipster subculture's attachment to authenticity and anti-capitalist views, paradoxically creates a strong economic base for the community.

Sharon Zukin, analyzing Williamsburg, Brooklyn notes an increase of boutique and artisanal shops along with third-space servicescapes. Initially, this neighborhood was predominantly Polish and Latino with a post-industrial economy in the 1980s. Crime being rampant and many crumbling abandoned factories littering the water front and many of the streets, Williamsburg was unattractive to any investors or potential visitors, outside of those attached to the inhabitants of the community. It wasn't until the 1980s that bohemian artists started taking notice of the vacant factory space, which could be rented or inhabited—illegally for the most part, even if rent was payed—and turned into work spaces, lofts, and places where artists could create and exhibit their artwork. This small cadre of individuals blossomed in the 1990s into something larger, and

in 1999, seemed to take hold of something larger than just people searching for cheap rent. Instead it became a community of like minded bohemian's.⁵

As this neighborhood in Brooklyn grew and attracted a white, middle class, college educated crowd of bohemians, hipsters, artists, and musicians, so too did the businesses begin to change. As Sharon Zukin explains, new retail entrepreneurs "represent the interests of a 'cultural' community...in a sense, 'social' entrepreneurs."⁶ As the hipster subculture began to grow and proliferate in the community of Williamsburg, so too did businesses which they themselves opened and operated. Finding niches in the community where there was a lacking, the residents of this neighborhood in Brooklyn began to open up shops, which matched the aesthetic of their subculture's lifestyle and ideals.

As the hipsters became new retail entrepreneurs—eventually spurring the term 'Made in Brooklyn' to become the cultural icon it is today—they altered their imagined and invented landscape, and in doing so, made it appealing to those who shared in this identity. Zukin noted that the residents of Williamsburg, "by opening new places of sociability where new residents feel comfortable, they help to create the emerging geographical community."⁷ The new retail entrepreneur notices a void, an absence of business which they feel culturally fits within their community's needs. They are residents who move into these neighborhoods,

⁵ Zukin, *Naked City*, 35-49.

⁶ Zukin, "New Retail Capital and Neighborhood Change," 58.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 58.

feeling a connection to the other artists and bohemians who now inhabit these spaces, and create businesses that embody their social and cultural needs.⁸

In developing these spaces of subcultural economic activity, the new retail entrepreneur creates their own neighborhood, perpetuating their needs, helping to imagine the landscape of their own cultural neighborhood. Just as Richard Lloyd describes in his book *Neo-Bohemia*, hipsters, bohemians, and artists, developed their own neighborhood, inventing an aesthetic in Wicker Park Chicago during the 1990s, and in doing so, revived a neighborhood, crumbling in around itself. Through their actions and the businesses they created, these hipsters developed a community focused on an ideology, with an unspoken set of beliefs. Instead of subcultures building their own utopian towns, or hippies who built from the ground up their own collectives and communes, the hipster subculture develops their boundaries amongst the already built streets of cities. Through the economic activity, of which the new retail entrepreneur participates, the subculture then flourishes. As new businesses which cater to their aesthetic proliferate, they essentially develop a new neighborhood built upon the old. Aged spaces become new, and as a result, improve.⁹ Although many of these new retail entrepreneurs are those who have a vested interest, a stake within the community, this is not always the case.

⁸ Zukin, *Naked City*, 19.

⁹ Richard Lloyd, *Neo-Bohemia* (New York: Routledge, 2006): 13-49.

Not all who venture into these neighborhoods open businesses to seek out the lifestyle and share in the beliefs of the hipster subculture. Many see a changing neighborhood with a landscape which is then appealing to the public, especially a middle-class, with a disposable income. As these store owners build off the foundations of what these original social entrepreneurs developed, they still cater to these beliefs and ideologies. The landscape of the neighborhood now altered by the cultural capital invested earlier into the community, this second wave of entrepreneurs take advantage of the work which the hipster subculture had invested into altering their subculture area. These outside investors who came in on this second wave of economic development, help to begin the slow process of gentrification that eventually consumes these neighborhoods.¹⁰

Many of these first wave, social entrepreneurs, that invested their new retail entrepreneurial capital into neighborhoods like Williamsburg, Brooklyn or Portland, Maine, did so with the intent to live a lifestyle and develop their community. Peter Hale, former resident of Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and entrepreneur, noted that eventually the development of Williamsburg became antithetical to what it originally was for him and those he knew in that community. Hale notes that Williamsburg became developed without regard for the indigenous populations characteristic and because of that became “increasingly alien so that the longer we stayed the more it seemed less familiar, I

¹⁰ Zukin, *Naked City*, 19-21.

suppose. And that was because of super-gentrification...”¹¹ Williamsburg became a shell of what it was due to large scale development, losing its appeal to the initial new retail entrepreneurs, as its aesthetic slipped away. Hale laments for the loss of businesses which created their neighborhood, and with that loss, so too did the subculture begin to lose its boundaries as the aesthetic was stripped from their streets. Hale notes, “they sort of smashed away any...all the DIY clubs, all the little book shops that were there forever...the character did change.”¹² Hale, now a resident of Portland, Maine, and successful business owner of a wine shop on Washington Avenue, argues that his generation has been touted as one of the least skilled or holding the highest entrepreneurial spirit, according to whom you ask or what article you read.

As a new retail entrepreneur, Hale noted a deficiency in Portland, a lack of a good wine shop. Focussing his talents and knowledge, Hale took a specialized view, and created a selection of wine and Belgium beers, which the connoisseur can appreciate at average prices. It is with Hale’s and his wife, Orenda’s, knowledge that the consumer can find an experience that differs from other locations at their shop. Their experiences of the wines are first hand, having traveled through Europe and also worked many years in the bar and restaurant businesses in New York City. These two embody the specialization of the new retail entrepreneurs, which Panero and Davidson discuss in their articles on

¹¹ Peter Hale, oral interview with author, April 13, 2015.

¹² Hale, April 13, 2015.

hipsters and the entrepreneurial drive. Although Peter and Orenda are not vinting the wine, they still rely on their knowledge to sell these products, and develop a business which is known for its specialization as wine merchants. This kind of specialization is what has begun to fuel Portland, Maine's economy, creating a quirky, unique place for hipsters to live, and tourists to visit.¹³

Portland, Maine has seen an increase of economic activity over the last fifteen years, which has been directly impacted by the new retail entrepreneur's presence within the city. Walk around the Portland landscape, down cement sidewalk and cobblestone street, and you will find many artisanal boutiques, restaurants, bars, coffee shops, art galleries, and artist performance spaces flourishing. Congress Street, in downtown Portland, appealed to the artist's aesthetic with the Portland Museum of Arts, Maine College of Arts, the Maine Historical Society, the Children's Museum, Space Gallery, and many art supply stores and galleries creating a developing Art's District. These unique spaces make this city an attractive home for those who wish to share in this lifestyle, and for the tourist who wishes to find authenticity. The brick buildings of the city—the Old Port and Arts Districts—make this an appealing escape to those searching to avoid the modernization of cities, with their steel and glass towers hovering high overhead, disrupting the views of skies, and smothering the older, smaller

¹³ Hale, April 13, 2015.

buildings of the city underneath their high gloss footprints. In the end, Portland offers the authenticity of history, for which the hipster subculture yearns.¹⁴

The Creation of a Community

Across from the old Portland Public Market on Preble Street, in the space that the beloved bar Slainte once inhabited, sits the new Arcadia National Bar. Reminiscent of eighties arcades, dark lit, and filled with brightly luminescent machines, this bar captures an authenticity that only millennials could appreciate. The arcade and pinball games originate from the eighties and early nineties time period, harkening to a time of youth for many hipsters. This adult play area becomes a throwback to childhood—the only difference being that local beer and liquor is served—while the only fare on the menu is grilled cheese sandwiches, and what food is more reminiscent of childhood, than grilled cheese sandwich. Bars of this kind have been found in other cities to receive the hipster designation such as Portland, Oregon, and Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and it is no mere coincidence that these bars find their way into hipster cities.¹⁵

The hipster subculture captures authenticity and a remembered past, a vintage aesthetic, and as result, seeks to recreate a moment in time from a

¹⁴ John F. Bauman, *Gateway to Vacationland* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012): 234.

¹⁵ Heather Steeves, "Arcadia National Bar Opening Tonight," *Maine Today*, August 28, 2014, <http://mainetoday.com/do-this-2/arcadia-national-bar-coming-to-downtown-portland-in-august-play-video-games-drink-beer/>

remembered past. Video arcade games allows the hipster to recreate their childhood in an adult world. As the consumption of alcohol and social bar scene is the adult version of playtime, the intermingling of arcade and alcohol creates a pathway between a reminisced childhood and the responsibilities of adult life. Arcadia is not singular in hipster cities, and many bars in Williamsburg, New York, and Portland, Maine, house vintage 80s and 90s arcade games right out in open view, rather than hidden in some dark recess of the room. Harry Bainbridge, a local resident of Brooklyn, New York, and film producer, highlights the attraction arcade games have in hipster subculture in his video *Dragonfly*. This video features an intense obsession from a thirty-something year old, participating in an underground arcade video game contest. Bainbridge, living in Brooklyn, captures how arcade games blur the lines between adulthood and childhood amongst the hipster subculture. In one scene, a beleaguered man enters his apartment, and begins to play a video game as if in a trance. Not even doffing his work clothes, he practices in his suit, insinuating a return from work, his adult life, while playing a game from childhood. The bar arcade becomes the perfect metaphor of the hipster's fetishization of their own childhood. The arcade no longer the location for teenagers after school, becomes the exclusive environment for the adult millennial—with the exclusivity being the minimum age restriction on

entering the bar—and as a result, the new retail entrepreneur is able to recreate their childhood.¹⁶

Important to the hipster subculture is art and performance spaces. Since the initial influx of artist, bohemians, and hipsters into Williamsburg, Brooklyn, utilized spaces which were vacant and deteriorating, as a result, they improved those spaces, which was important for the continuation and recognition of that element of the hipster subculture. While Williamsburg has Galapagos, a space for outsider art and avant-garde performances, Portland, Maine, has SPACE Gallery. These locations are important to the hipster subculture to maintain a bohemian artistic aesthetic which allows for the exploration of ideas. SPACE Gallery's mission statement notes they are “ a nonprofit, multidisciplinary gallery and performance space in the heart of the arts district in Portland, Maine. Our mission is to present contemporary, emerging and unconventional arts, artists and ideas.”¹⁷ This idea of unconventional arts allows for the artist to stretch their ideas past mainstream culture and acceptability. The hipster who operates in opposition to consumerism and the dominant culture finds themselves experimenting in a gallery like SPACE, and as the mission statement states, in an unconventional matter, which by definition of unconventional goes against the common beliefs of society.

¹⁶ *Dragonfly*, online, directed by Harry Bainbridge (2014) <http://www.hbno2.com/dragonfly>

¹⁷ Space Gallery, “Get Involved: Mission Statement” (Portland, Maine: 2013) <http://www.space538.org/get-involved>

Along with SPACE Gallery, Portland has the Maine College of Arts bringing in a population of unique minded individuals who help fuel the hipster subculture. The ability and freedom to experiment with art is important to the hipster subculture. It is not that all hipsters are artists, just as not all hipsters are new retail entrepreneurs, but the ability to pursue life in a nonconformist way allows for the development of new ideas. Tom Owens, a former student at Massachusetts College of Art 2005 and resident of the greater Portland area the majority of his life, had experienced the hipster subculture while in art school, recalling that at the time it was difficult to inherently discern hipster from others due to an insider bias, but he does recall noticing outward displays of hipster subculture, which now he is able to recognize. Not noticing hipsters his freshman year, Owens recalls,

...art school breeds all types of peculiar, subculture-adherent characters that are oft overlooked by an insider. There were people with mustaches and people with trucker's hats...but there was also a 7 foot tall man who dressed in polyester Halloween costumes and carried around an old suitcase filled with happy-meal toys.¹⁸

This level of individuality is what helps shape and craft the identity of the hipster subculture. An artists level of individuality is key, and as a result, the hipster artist is allowed to explore their identity through the alternative lifestyle and acceptance that can be found in art school. Owens further notes that, “artists, by nature, are individuals. Artists go to art school. In order to assert their

¹⁸ Tom Owens, e-mail message to author, June 24, 2015.

individuality, they project their innate drive to be unique (and be recognized as such by the community).”¹⁹ The school itself becomes their imagined landscape, where they can explore an alternative lifestyle, which is in opposition to mainstream society, that is accepted by those within their own community. This level of acceptance for alternative lifestyle is not just found within the confines of the art school campus, but amongst hipster neighborhoods and cities in which they inhabit.

Those with an artistic leaning, make up a large percentage of hipsters, and as a result, cities which have an alternative aesthetic attract a hipster population. Portland, Maine and Williamsburg have Zukin recalls that in Williamsburg art created a community and drew in other like minded individuals, which then field and grew this subcultural movement. Williamsburg’s artists opened small galleries with alternative art, and increased the cultural capital of the area, attracting other artists, gallery owners, new retail entrepreneurs, and art critics to join the cadre of other artists already living in these abandoned factories of this neighborhood. In Portland, Maine artist galleries abound with the Friday night art walk, and like many of the illegal, underground—yet well known and ignored by law enforcement—art happenings of Williamsburg, Sacred and Profane on Peaks Island in Portland, Maine followed similar fashion.²⁰

¹⁹ Tom Owens, e-mail, June 24, 2015.

²⁰ Zukin, *Naked City*, 46.

Williamsburg, well known for its underground art exhibits and shows, such as “Organism” in 1993, Portland, Maine, had Sacred and Profane. Battery Steele, situated on the Southeast side of Peaks Island, is a WWII fortification sitting on 14 acres of land along the oceanside. This location, which was placed on the National Register of Historic Sites in 2005, was also the site of the alternative underground art festival Sacred and Profane. Sacred and Profane focused on the experience shared by both the performer and the participant. As a participant of said festival notes “the semi-secrecy protects the mystery from unwanted inroads of consumerism and allows the festival to retain it's artistic integrity.”²¹ This attitude of authenticity and anti-consumerism is shared by artists in the Williamsburg community, and residents of that neighborhood have complained that a similar event, Rubulad, has not been the same since it garnered media attention. These events allow the hipster subculture to create an identity for their neighborhoods and cities within which they live. The creation of these events help map the alternative, anti-capitalist, and anti-consumerism identities of their imagined landscape and environment. As Sophy Bot noted on her living conditions in Brooklyn, she lived in 3-4-5 in Bushwick, Brooklyn, a repurposed sewing factory with a group over one hundred artists, and their proclamation, “secede from Brooklyn in protest of ‘destructive economic forces.’”²² Art is essential to the hipster subculture because it allows the hipster to be free to experiment, which

²¹ <https://aithyia.files.wordpress.com/2010/12/sacredandprofaneprocessdoc.pdf>

²² Sophy Bot, *The Hipster Effect*, (Self Published, 2012): 18.

perpetuates an aesthetic of the bohemian artist who searches for self enlightenment through their own experiment.

It is not just with art and free expression that we find similarities between these two cities, but also a prolific music scene. Although Williamsburg's music scene is more self-made with a whole host of bands developing their talent's through their musical endeavors, both areas host a vibrant nightlife of music venues and local artists. With names of venues like The Union Pool, Verboten, and The Knitting Factory, among many more, residents of Williamsburg search for an authenticity of music. Peter Hale, former resident of Williamsburg, recalled that he had moved to that neighborhood in Brooklyn because Greenwich Village lacked the authenticity of which he expected for New York City. He associates cheap rent as a contributing factor, but among all else, that he was in a band and was able to live above rehearsal space. Portland, Maine has a whole host of music venues that have existed for a long time, but others have exploded onto the scene in the past fifteen years, during the proliferation of the hipster subculture within the city's boundaries. Music venues such as Port City Music Hall, One Longfellow Square, SPACE Gallery, the Portland House of Music, Flask Lounge and Empire have emerged on the scene, and others such as Geno's, the Asylum, and The Merrill Auditorium have had a long standing history of hosting local and mainstream bands within their walls. These venues allow musician's and artists to showcase their talents in these smaller venues, and as a result helps bolster the hipster subculture through the formation of their musical identities.

The bar plays an important role in the formation of spaces in which the hipster subculture can congregate. Portland, Maine and Williamsburg, Brooklyn are both areas with concentrations of bar/restaurants which cater to a hipster aesthetic. Like the Arcadia of Portland and the many barcades of Williamsburg, both these cities share similar bars with an appeal to the hipster subculture. As has been discussed, hipsters have an affinity toward cheap sub premium beers like PBR, and also micro and craft brews which helps them identify with a specialized product like any other artisanal product handcrafted. On Bedford Avenue in Williamsburg hangs a black sign with gold lettering which reads 'Rosamunde, Sausage Grill, Fine Beers On Tap.' This bar, carrying local and regional beers along with tall boy cans of cheap sub premium beers, serves artisanal, locally handmade sausages. This bar is a self serve restaurant, where you approach a counter, place your order, get a ticket, and when your order is up, they announce it. To the right of the bar hangs a flat screen television with movies playing for all in the bar to see. On Exchange Street in Portland, Maine, is a restaurant named The Thirsty Pig that is the same, down to the television to the right of the bar playing movies for all to see. The patron capacity between the two is different, but over all the setup is the same, along with the dark wood panelling, and the use of chalkboard to show the specials behind the bar. If one was to walk into both of those locations at differing times, they would be convinced that these are owned by the same people, but they are not. Instead these two restaurants have found a niche in

communities steeped in the hipster subculture. Interestingly enough, the owner of The Thirsty Pig is from Williamsburg, Brooklyn. This direct connection of the two locations creates a parallel of economies between the two cities, bridging the different communities of the hipster subculture, illustrating the similar aesthetics that must exist to attract the hipster subculture.

Portland, Maine and Williamsburg, Brooklyn have many similarities between these two cities. They have both experienced an industrial phase in which the neighborhoods and cities themselves were once more of a production space than servicescape. With both having working waterfronts at one time, they were ripe for industry and production of goods which could be delivered and off loaded to supply factories. After these industries failed, moved, or disappeared for one reason or another, these areas were left to decay in a postindustrial state. It is with this downturn that these areas were eventually ripe for the picking. As bohemians and artists moved into these areas, taking advantage of cheap rents—in many times illegal loft spaces—they began to repopulate the community and bring a different job source to the area. As Williamsburg and Portland began to develop a different economy based on the service industry, it was with the new retail entrepreneur's that developed these spaces, and found a niches that were vacant before. These businesses based themselves around specialization, and as a result stilled maintained themselves in a capitalist system, but rebelled against it, utilizing earlier tenets of capitalism, with a focus on specific skills, traits, and artisanal products. The anti-consumerism of the hipster was a large component of

this specialization, and as a result, began to give cities a quirky aesthetic, drawing a fine line between consumption and consumerism. It is in the third space servicescapes that we find the hipster consumption pattern, and as a result, Portland and Williamsburg have a high concentration of restaurants, bars, coffeehouses, and artisanal shops. Along with music venues, art galleries, and performance spaces, these factors all make Williamsburg and Portland two locations were are perfect for the hipster subculture to flourish. As a result of this groundwork the hipster subculture creates in developing a community, gentrification is right on their heels.

A Tale of Two Gentrified Hipster Cities

Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and Portland, Maine, two hipster cities, are both enduring the process of gentrification. This process is altering their city landscapes, and making the areas undesirable to the hipster subcultures. Although, this does not mean there is a mass exodus of hipsters out of these areas, it is an eventuality that what made these areas so appealing and quirky will soon go the way of Wicker Park, Chicago. As the old industrial buildings which represented the cheap rent and performance space of bohemians, artists, and hipsters alike are torn down and replaced with multi-million dollar condominiums, so goes the idiosyncratic aesthetic that drew in this population of new retail entrepreneurs.

Portland, Maine has been moving toward a gentrified landscape for the last twenty-five years. Although Patrick Heidkamp and Susan Lucas note that this has been occurring since the 1980s in Portland, it hasn't become so obvious and prevalent until the early 2010s. With the redevelopment of the waterfront in the 1990s, this city laid a foundation of commerce and tourism, and subsequently opened the door for many investors to improve the cities deteriorating landscape and economy. The improvement of the waterfront drew in businesses which saw a great dependency on this natural resource. Killian and Dodson argue that waterfront revitalization in areas of severe neglect and dilapidation benefit the city. It is through increased tourism, generated by the revitalization and changing focus of business spaces, which becomes appealing for so many, especially those catering to tourism and leisure, the main focus being consumption. Portland's redevelopment of the waterfront was just one step in the direction of gentrification, and this laid the foundation for a population of artists, bohemians, and hipsters to find their niche.²³

The gentrification of Portland and Williamsburg is occurring along the waterfront locations and in areas with views of the water. Heidkamp and Lucas define gentrification as "reinvestment in and rebuilding of the physical structures that have undergone a period of disinvestment."²⁴ While this definition of

²³ C. Patrick Heidkamp & Susan Lucas, "Finding the Gentrification Frontier Using Census Data: The Case of Portland, Maine," *Urban Geography* 27, no. 2 (2006): 103.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 107.

gentrification places the process on only the rehabilitation of structures, they assign new construction and middle and upper class areas in the non-gentrified—high status. Differing in her definition of gentrification, Zukin defines it from a socio-cultural viewpoint, noting that it is not just the buildings that change, but the aesthetic and culture of the neighborhood itself, which alters the created and imagined landscape. Zukin argues that gentrification is the process of “...the movement of the rich, well-educated folks, the gentry, into lower-class neighborhoods, and the higher property values that follow them, transforming a ‘declining’ district into an expansive neighborhood with historic or hipster charm.”²⁵ This definition defines the postindustrial eras that both Williamsburg and Portland were experiencing prior to the influx of bohemians, artists, and hipsters into their boundaries. With most of the development occurring along the waterfront of Williamsburg, developers are dismantling the old factories along the East River that once attracted bohemians, artists, and hipsters to their areas, building condominiums in place of crumbling facades, with million dollar prices for a unit.

This same process of gentrification is occurring in Portland as well, with high rise apartments being developed along the Munjoy Hill area, where the elevated setting allows for views of the water on three sides, and views of the city down below. Older wooden and brick homes, which were built after the great fire, are purchased in lots and then demolished, creating a juxtaposition between

²⁵ Zukin, *Naked City*, 8.

neighbor's two or three story balloon frame homes and large hulking contemporary apartments buildings, with multicolor panels and skeletons of glass and steel. Abigail Mann, an employee of Amidon Appraisal—a company that appraises commercial real estate in the State of Maine—notes that redevelopment occurred in the 1980s and 1990s in the Old Port Area, with focus on investment and businesses, but recent development has changed to multiunit high rise apartment complexes, with units selling for a million dollars and upward. Mann notes that Portland is in a period of gentrification, and the development of Portland's economy, is tied in with the hipster subculture. This development occurred after a strong economic foundation was developed in both these areas, with many thanks to the hipster entrepreneur.²⁶

The hipster, as a new retail entrepreneur develops the groundwork for gentrification, and unwittingly spoils to which they work in opposition. As hipsters navigate anti-capitalist and anti-consumerist practices through their own roles in the economy, unbeknownst to them, they open up the door for gentrification to develop. As Zukin notes “high rents may not only bring more expensive boutiques but also other kinds of nonlocal retail capital that subtly alter the emerging sense of place.”²⁷ In Williamsburg, as high rise condominiums begin to crowd the waterfront, taking over where dilapidated factories once rose into the sky, rents rise like those new apartment complexes, reaching high into the

²⁶Abigail Mann, oral interview with author, March 24, 2015.

²⁷ Zukin, “New Retail Capital and Neighborhood Change,” 61.

clouds, dominating anything reminiscent of the old neighborhood that stands close by. Between 2003 and 2007 a survey conducted of rents on Bedford Avenue—one of the well known hipster streets of Brooklyn—found rents rose by 224 percent, and close by on Graham Avenue by 158 percent. These high numbers illustrate the impact the hipster subculture, as new retail entrepreneurs, have on Williamsburg. This increase in rent draws in outside investors who begin the process of gentrification. It is only with the new retail entrepreneurs creation of a community through “social” entrepreneurship, that the process of gentrification begins. By creating a community, a neighborhood with a hip aesthetic, the hipster unwittingly draws in people from outside their communities, to view their neighborhood and experience the ‘epicenter of cool.’ By creating their imagined landscape, the hipster creates a theme park for those outside their subculture, and as a result, draws the attention of those from whom they sought to remove themselves.²⁸

Portland and Williamsburg have seen an economic resurgence in the past fifteen years. With the help of socially conscious entrepreneurs who focused on building a community, both these cities were able to prosper and attract a host of residents who shared the same outlook for these communities. As the new retail entrepreneurs invested money into boutiques, artisanal shops, craft brewing, and other businesses, the cities began to flourish. These new retail entrepreneurs were often time part of the hipster subculture, and as a result, both of these cities

²⁸ Zukin, “New Retail Capital and Neighborhood Change,” 61-62.

developed a hip aesthetic. Eventually this development attracted investors from outside the community, and as a result, the process of gentrification began. Where once those of the hipster subculture sought to escape capitalism and consumerism, trying to shape a community out of their morals and ethics, they unwittingly created communities appealing to those with capitalist tendencies? The very thing hipsters worked to build in opposition to society, was the very thing which attracted gentrification. Although this does not mean that the hipster subculture has abandoned these cities, there is a different feel, as high rise apartments climb to the sky, obscuring the historic brick charm, lending authenticity, which attracted them in the first place. Maybe this is the inevitability of the hipster subculture, that they build, only to have their imagined communities destroyed? Or is their subculture like Icarus, who flew too close to the sun, to only have his wax wings melt, their subculture burning too bright too fast, only to be consumed by the fire of capitalism? This is not a death knell for their subculture though, it is still alive and well. And as the process of gentrification takes over these hipster cities, a new city emerges from the ashes, being touted as the next hipster city.

Chapter 4

A Hipster For All Seasons:

Conclusion

The hipster subculture forms its identity in direct opposition to consumerism, capitalism, and globalization. Like hipsters of the 1950s, modern day hipsters create their communities within cities and urban neighborhoods, moving back from their suburban environments, which represented the consumerist trends of their childhood. These urban environments tended to be cheap areas of decay where artists, bohemians, and hipsters were able to live and develop their own imagined landscape, reinforcing and reinterpreting a set of beliefs and aesthetics.

This countercultural movement, finding itself beginning in the 1990s, became prolific throughout Portland, Maine and Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York—two amongst many other cities which housed concentrations of the hipster subculture. These two cities were ripe for the entrance of artists, bohemians, and hipsters due a postindustrial phase which allowed for cheap rent and a revitalization of the area. Like hippies who formed communes, hipsters grouped together, but instead of living with nature in a collective, they lived in the urban environment, building off the decay of previous industry, using the brick, mortar, and steel as a foundation for their neighborhoods.

Hipsters came together in opposition to capitalism and consumerism, and in so doing, became “social” entrepreneurs, creating an imagined landscape within the urban environment. The shared ideas of this subculture helped develop the economies of these cities to reflect their aesthetic. The boutique, the artisanal shop, the bar, the restaurant, the coffee shop, these all reflected views of the hipster subculture, and as a result, their surroundings reflected back as an environment of their beliefs. These spaces became avenues for entrepreneurs to operate in opposition to big business, and allowed residents of these neighborhoods to shop at small stores, which helped perpetuate their lifestyles and subcultural beliefs.

Cultural artifacts of the hipster are imbued with meaning, crafting their subcultural identity. It is not just the artifacts, but how they are used and what they represent, which molds the hipster’s identity. The hipster’s affinity toward beer is represented through the attraction to the craft brewing industry and sub premium cheap beers. As the hipsters navigate their way through a capitalist nation, they find their choices can become cultural dissent. As the hipster chooses sub premium cheap beers, they make the choice to consume a beer which does not follow mainstream practices of the larger beer conglomerates. The small breweries which produce this cheap beer, become the rally cry for anti-consumerism and anti-capitalism—these beers viewed as the badge of the working class hero. With no overt advertising campaigns, this subculture feels they are not told what to drink, but instead choose what to drink. This aids in the

development of identity for the hipster, working in opposition to mainstream culture.

The hipster's love for craft brewing tends to follow the aesthetic of neighborhood creation and artisanal products. Like any other artisanal boutique, which makes and sells a product, craft breweries are no different. These brewers develop a sense of community around their facilities, and help the hipster subculture identify with their neighborhood. Like Portland's booming craft brewing industry, we find many hipster cities throughout the United States and the world, steeped in grains, hops, and water, as multiple breweries grow everyday in these epicenters of cool. The hipster subculture develops their anti-consumerist practices in opposition to the consumption of products from faceless corporate giants, and as a result, they gravitate toward local craft breweries, where the owners of these businesses have a tendency to make themselves available to the public, and are known not just as the owners of their beer, but the brewers themselves.

While the hipster subculture crafts their identity in opposition to capitalism, consumerism, and globalization, there are those in the public who have doubt on the existence of them altogether. The ongoing debate on the existence of the hipster subculture will not subside anytime soon. Although few people believe they do not exist altogether, many believe that hipster is nothing more than a media invented term to promote a fashion trend. Many doubt the existence a subculture, believing that it is nothing more than young millennials

wearing quirky clothing and drinking cheap beer. Unfortunately very few academics have studied this modern phenomenon of hipsters, and those that have, ignored the importance of many beliefs and aesthetics, only analyzing consumption patterns, while ignoring what these patterns mean and how they help craft their identity. Those that acknowledge the existence of the hipster subculture, have analyzed this group from a sociocultural, economic, and anthropological viewpoint, and have come out agreeing, this is a subcultural movement.

The hipster subculture exists, and moves in opposition to a growing giant in this world. Although the carefree attitude that many find with this subculture, at times bordering on apathy, can sway people in believing they are not a cohesive group, this subculture does not need to sit down and collectively acknowledge the moniker given to them, hipster. Instead these individuals come together for differing reasons, and find themselves mutually working toward the development of a community where they are allowed to be themselves, escaping the world of big-box stores and corporate giants. Within the borders of their cities and neighborhoods, they feel safe against the faceless leviathans trying to consume society with its cheap goods, having no conscience for the consumer or the workers. The hipster exists, choosing a set of ethics, believing their choices today, may influence a future tomorrow.

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