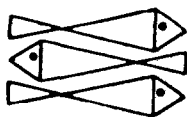


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Inside the Lower East Side

The New Bohemia: The Combine Generation, by John Gruen (*Shorecrest*. 180 pp. \$4.95), pictures the flamboyantly unwashed in the East Village, where communal love and happenings are a way of life. David Hales is a West Village recluse.

By DAVID HALES

HOW LONG is it since someone was heard blithely singing *East Side, West Side, All Around the Town*? Manhattan has been transformed many times since that was a popular tune. But today there is one concentrated part of the east side that is throbbing to a new rhythm. "It has an imperceptible underground beat and you feel it increasing as the night wears on. The rhythm of the Combine Generation is taking over."

The area is called the East Village because it is cast of the paradise that fell to rising real estate prices and commercial entertainment. Washington Square has given way to Tompkins Square Park. There, on the land that covers the old Stuyvesant Swamp, you will find a rare world in which anxiety is not fled from or suppressed but cherished and fed. Allowed to flow with all the exuberance of the head waters of the Nile, it rises as the lode star and provides the edge for sex, for dancing, for art, and all the ingredients of life. Perhaps the only security this section knows comes from the awareness that it is poorly served

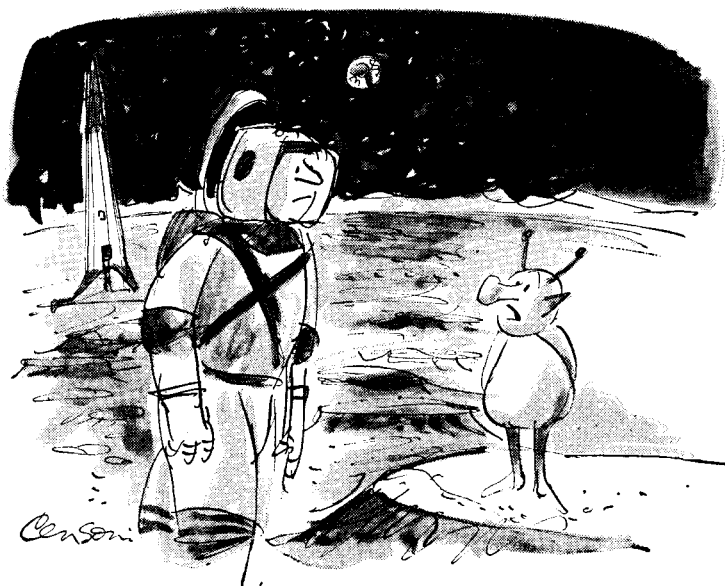
by public transportation. Someone remarked that the best way to get there is by boat.

John Gruen has squared off this mysterious region with the tenacity and perseverance of a Livingstone. He has interviewed the leading inhabitants and attended their sessions of work and play. Presumably, before the swamp was filled in the natives were known for such pursuits as spear-fishing and basketry, but the present inhabitants are frenetically active in the arts—and integration. Integration of the races, integration of the sexes (scant interest in such redundant forms as hetero or homo), and of the arts themselves. Happenings are a way of life here.

There is little room for the recluse or the solitary individual. He would soon have to combine.

Stepping off with an excursion into the details of the more ordinary daily lives in which love is the main creative activity, we learn from *The New Bohemia* about such subcultures as the Kerista Group. This is solely concerned with communal loving. A loving with no preferences, for it is the duty of each member to accept love from whoever offers it. There is some unexplained loophole, or freedom, however, because one of the long-standing members of the group is still a virgin.

Much of the general social life takes place at the tribal dances. These are performed in a hall that was built by previous immigrants who were of Polish



"Don't ask me. I'm a stranger here myself."

We seek your help in a dangerous election.

We believe that responsible democracy could suffer a crippling defeat in 1966—unless prompt action is taken.

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We need your help, your financial support, your vigilance.

1966 will be one of the most fateful mid-term elections of this century.

At stake is whether responsible liberalism in America can be preserved as a vital force, whether men of integrity who exercise independent judgment can survive. If we fail, the Great Society will be frustrated; the nation, bewildered and desperate, may plunge into the extremes of militarism or isolationism; and we may contemplate an era of demoralizing turbulence at home.

Two issues burn like a prairie fire across the country: civil rights and Vietnam. In civil rights, angry extremists are rapidly driving the moderates from the field. The Center is silent. The violent Right grows ominously stronger. Vietnam pressures to "go all out" or to "get out" have obscured our purpose—to the point where we have lost our sense of direction, not just in Vietnam,

but everywhere on the globe.

What the Right failed to achieve by frontal attack in '64, they may achieve piecemeal this fall. They hope to defeat liberal congressmen who won by narrow margins in '64. If they do, control of the Congress will revert to the destructive coalition of Old Guard Republicans and Old Guard Southerners.

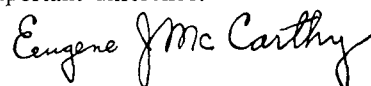
It is to avoid this catastrophe that we seek your support for men whose quality and courage will preserve the vital Center: Senate candidates like Lee Metcalf in Montana, Ralph Harding in Idaho, Frank Morrison in Nebraska.

House candidates like George Senner in Arizona, James Corman and John Tunney in California, Roy McVicker in Colorado, John Culver in Iowa, Gale Schisler in Illinois, Weston Vivian in Michigan, James Howard in New Jersey, Lester Wolff in New York, John Gilligan in Ohio, Neiman Craley in Pennsylvania and Lynn Stalbaum in Wisconsin.

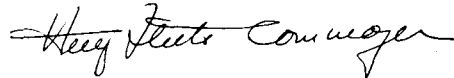
These are some of the men we support: invaluable Senate candidates and some 50 men in the House who represent clear-cut choices against right wing opponents. They are the men we cannot afford to lose. Their continued effectiveness depends on you.

Danger signals are already fluttering in the winds of fear and of hate. With

your help we can offer the country an alternative to reaction, resentment, and retreat. Vigilance is the price of freedom, but vigilance alone is not enough. We need your support. \$100, \$50, \$5. Every dollar, like every vote, makes an important difference.



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extraction, as can be inferred its name, the "Dom," or home.

The various arts take up most of the book, and they are dealt with in detail and provide intriguing material. There are, for instance, enough Little Magazines to keep everyone occupied with reading material and the writers in full expression even if the swamp waters rise again and transportation totally fail.

Theatrical fare, on subjects forbidden elsewhere, with an accent on the unpredictable and with audience participation, is performed on the numerous café and loft stages. A Christian temple dedicated to St. Mark, remaining from an earlier settlement, is also utilized for this purpose on occasions. Allen Ginsberg leads the poets and John Cage the musicians, and the whole of life is a happening.

The Fugs return from a wide swing across the hinterland to top all the singing. And artists paint the scenery during and not before a dance performance. This is certainly not the school of Pavlova; that Swan went with the swamp.

But it is in the movies—the underground cinema—that everyone really integrates and turns the expression on. The writers, the dancers, the actors, the artists (even those basket-weavers, if there are any still around) can combine. Considering that the subject matter is

too esoteric or taboo for wide circulation, and that they depend on neighbors and friends for the cast, the movie-makers have chalked up an impressive output. Andy Warhol, the pop artist, produces a film a week. It is here that satire, the destruction of attitudes from outside is most nearly complete. "To peep at sex was taboo. To exhibit is just as taboo. But, if the peeper and the exhibitionist come to an open agreement about their roles, guilt will be dispersed."

THE movie makers have many problems unknown to Hollywood. A marauding tribe of detectives took away 10,000 feet of edited film from Ed Sanders's epic, three-years-in-the-making *Amphetamine Head*. An announcement in his magazine indicates other problems he has to face: "The Director has been plagued by stars disappearing in Hillside Hospital & Central Islip, & the hip chick star tendency to vanish somewhere in New Jersey. Even though you may have married that dentist, please bring your snatch back for a few more reels of *Amphetamine Glory*."

In this pioneering work Gruen has been handsomely served by photographer Fred W. McDarrah, who evokes the atmosphere of the whole scene. Quite the best wildlife nature shots I've seen since *Bring 'Em Back Alive*.

State of U.S. Culture

Pop Goes America, by William K. Zinsser (Harper & Row. 174 pp. \$4.95), zeroes in on aspects of current U.S. culture from Woody Allen to Andy Warhol. H. Allen Smith's thirtieth book, "Son of Rhubarb," will be published early next year.

By H. ALLEN SMITH

WHEN I first came to New York in 1929 the metropolitan woods were aswarm with men who wrote humor for publication in newspapers, magazines, and books. Offhand I can think of Ring Lardner, Robert Benchley, James Thurber, Will Cuppy, Frank Sullivan, Corey Ford, Nunnally Johnson, Don Marquis, Milt Gross—the list could probably be extended to the length of this review. There has been strong evidence in recent years that the breed is going the way of the whooping crane if not the great auk.

The funny guys are coming out of college and going straight into television, and sometimes I think many of them are not very funny. However, from time to time in these bleak days a new fellow comes down the pike, a writer who has it and has it good. William K. Zinsser has been on the scene for several years but he has just lately been hitting his stride.

His new book consists of a series of seventeen essays, and what it proves more than anything else is that Mr. Zinsser is one hell of a reporter. When he sails into a subject he doesn't let go until he has it all, and then he knows how to put it together on paper.

The book purports to be an examination of pop culture in our country. It isn't quite that. There is a long opening section about the people who collect pop art in large quantities. But many of the other pieces don't seem to have much if any relationship to pop culture at all. The words "pop art" have been dropped into them, maybe once along toward the end, but beyond that some of the best of them have no firm connection with the book's theme.

There is a perceptive and knowledgeable piece on the state of American humor, much of it dealing with television comics and monologists. Pop culture? There is a swell examination of the life and times of Woody Allen, another on James Bond, and still another on Guy Lombardo. Pop doesn't seem to apply to Woody Allen, but it might to the other two. If you want to stretch a point.

In the section on pop art collectors, note these two paragraphs:

America's explosive bestseller is on trial!

**This is
Arthur
Constantine,
plaintiff:**



He claims that the idea for the best-selling novel, *The Paper Dragon*, has been stolen from his play *Catchpole*. The court's verdict will decide the fate of this almost successful dramatist who has repeatedly sold out in the past, but who now clutches at an identity. Read *THE PAPER DRAGON*, the big trial novel of the year by EVAN HUNTER, author of *The Blackboard Jungle*.

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