

Patrick Barr-Melej, *Psychedelic Chile: Youth, Counterculture, and Politics on the Road to Socialism and Dictatorship*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017. Photographs, abbreviations, notes, index, 362 pp.; hardcover \$85, paperback \$34.95, ebook \$19.99.

Sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll. This clichéd trio is synonymous with rebellious youth in the second half of the twentieth century. Perhaps it invokes images of young teens jamming to music that the older generation found repugnant, women dressing in so-called promiscuous ways while conceptions of premarital relationships changed, and, of course, long-haired, flower-adorned hippies getting stoned at Woodstock.

But these three classical components of counterculture did not exist in a vacuum. They formed a social identity that conjured fearful responses to what became known as the Youth Question. In this book, Barr-Melej explores how counterculture among youth formed and was subsequently attacked during a period of massive political change in Chile. In 1970 the Marxist politician Salvador Allende was elected president of Chile, and his socialist Popular Unity (UP) Party was brought to power. He would remain until his suicide following a bloody coup in 1973 that led to two decades of repressive dictatorship.

The role of young Chileans during this time was far from negligible. Empowered by the prospect of change, youths formed groups to participate and to carve their niche in political life during the 1960s and 1970s. The young leftists struggled for class revolution; those on the right espoused conservative values. In all, the “good young Chilean” participated politically. But what of the youth who eschewed political life? What was their role in shaping the identity of Chilean youth?

Barr-Melej focuses on another watershed event of 1970: a hippie music festival organized by 19-year-old Jorge Gómez and his friends, known as Piedra Roja. This was a salient representation of an emerging *hippismo* identity referred to as *criollo* (homegrown) counterculture. The three-day festival, inspired by Woodstock, drew thousands of young Chileans from different backgrounds, who enjoyed marijuana, intimacy, and good tunes. These activities transcended class divides; at Piedra Roja, working-class youth bonded over marijuana with their blonder counterparts from Santiago's wealthier neighborhoods, and the groups intermingled unexpectedly. For many youth, Barr-Melej argues, *criollo* counterculture offered an alternative to contemporary social discourse in a way that prioritized generational identity over class identity and transcended the latter.

But the event, which ended on a sour note after outside thieves and prostitutes wreaked havoc among festivalgoers, sparked a tremendous backlash against *criollo* counterculture. Moral outrage erupted on many fronts, as parents, media, political parties, and politically oriented youth shared dismay that the counterculture they had heard about abroad had made its way to their own country. Here begins Barr-Melej's analysis of the youth question, as generational rifts widened and became a defining feature of Chilean identity. This question was widely discussed in media and novels and applied both to university students marching in the streets for academic reform and carefree hippies sharing art and joints in downtown parks. But

unlike the former, the lack of politicization of countercultural youths led to widespread indignation during a time when the Chilean government and society faced an uncertain future.

Divided by ideology, Chile's political parties on both the left and the right found a common enemy in what they perceived to be a widely damaging social trend. *Hippismo* proved a mutual adversary to Allende's supporters and antagonists as well. In the eyes of the left, "counterculture's emphasis on the self and personal freedom negated the imperative of social consciousness . . . ignored the reality of class struggle, and evinced the egoism of capitalism" (5). After all, marijuana use was consumption in itself. *Hippismo* was a squandering of young potential, the bourgeoisie imitating foreign influence rather than truly homegrown. For the right, it was an affront to traditional values, a malice born of narcotics and foreign influence, particularly in a period when the power of the Catholic Church was waning. Sexual liberation also struck a chord as traditional and modern views of femininity clashed. Questions of female virginity and the supposed sexualization of young teenage girls, as evidenced by their promiscuous clothing, were covered by sympathetic media, as well as criticized by political-leaning press. Leftists saw in the licentiousness that appeared in public spaces, such as movie advertisements, a reflection of bourgeois immorality and a threat to the nuclear family's cohesiveness.

Counterculture was both heterodox and heterogeneous. Youth who found little spiritual enlightenment in *hippismo* had other options. Lying somewhat outside the hippie consumption of drugs and sex were members of a cultlike group that followed the teachings of the Argentine-born spiritual leader Mario Luis Rodríguez Cobos, known as Silo. Siloism's Poder Joven group was more organized with a set doctrine that called for introspection and for "a more humane cosmology," by means of an anarchy-tinted process that shunned social conventions and invoked vehement fears of lawlessness from the left and the right. It was no consolation that young girls went "missing" from their families to join Poder Joven. Similar to more unstructured counterculture youth, members of this group focused little on class struggle in their ideology, an attitude that antagonized Marxists.

Music also served to distinguish rock-laden hippies from their politicized counterparts. The latter developed a style with loud socialist overtones, *Nueva Canción*, which supplemented Marxist revolutionary discourse and was often produced under the same party-affiliated record label. But *criollo* rock music lacked a partisan pitch. As rock 'n' roll blossomed in the United States at midcentury, it was criticized in Chile as merely an import that ignored the pertinent social issues that *Nueva Canción* addressed. But for counterculture youth, this distinction served as what Barr-Melej refers to as "an existentialist gesture, with the search for a sort of enlightenment and freedom rising above materialist and political concerns" (111).

Barr-Melej's use of popular media from both sides of the political divide gives a comprehensive view of counterculture identity's impact on Chilean society. More than just a weekend of debauchery and cool music, the Piedra Roja festival marked the emergence of a challenge to social and political orthodoxy in a way that scared officials, media, and fellow youth on both sides of the spectrum. For the casual

reader, the book provides detailed insight into the history of this Latin American country at a time when politics and war were similarly invoking grievances in the United States from peace-minded hippies. But most of all, it is a nuanced perspective of what “sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll” meant for a generation that separated itself from the political turmoil of the time. Barr-Melej’s analysis gives new significance to the miniskirt, the joint, and the catchy song. The book gives voice to the groups of young Chileans who did not fit the mold of what their country wanted them to be but who would play a defining role in shaping discourse on Chile’s journey to the present day.

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Camilo D. Trumper, *Ephemeral Histories: Public Art, Politics, and the Struggle for the Streets in Chile*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016. Photographs, figures, notes, index, 296 pp.; hardcover \$85, paperback \$29.95, ebook.

Among students of modern Latin American history and politics, few moments have captured the imagination more than the rise and fall of democratically elected Chilean socialist president Salvador Allende and his Popular Unity coalition (1970–73). Scholarship abounds regarding how Chilean institutions failed, what went wrong at the top, what external meddling was afoot, and the “democratic revolution from below.” Yet historian Camilo Trumper’s book is a fresh, sophisticated, multidisciplinary, and wide-gauge lens into this period. In a creative conceptual integration of urban, visual, cinematic, and performance studies and more, Trumper brings the politics of the streets to the fore. He argues that the enlivened, participatory politics of the streets, this symbol of explosive action and possibility in the public sphere, constituted the central threat that the dictatorship (1973–90) sought to cease and reorder.

Trumper attempts to transcend most portrayals of the Popular Unity (UP) years as polarized, preferring to think of the period as one of “kinetic” politics (3), of a public sphere in movement. He suggests that we might think of everyday reality as far more nuanced, and that by examining such arenas as innovative and inclusive industrial design and use, creative protest making, collaborative production and distribution chains, art brigades, and revolutionary filmmaking, we can appreciate the politically charged moment as more vibrant, textured, and contingent than a mere left versus right analysis will allow.

Trumper’s work joins what could be seen as a spatial turn in Latin American studies, in which cityscapes, architecture, and sites become the analytical focus. *Ephemeral Histories* also emphasizes the movement of such scapes and the fleeting or ephemeral nature of political, visual, performative expression. This is seen, for example, in the ways that political-cultural groups battle to convey a message on a wall, which is then whitewashed yet continues to hold the palimpsestic traces of what came before. *Ephemera*, a term now widely used in performance studies, is meant here to capture the lingering feel or affect after a heady protest, mural-making action, or street theater performance.