Popular Culture of the 1920's

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by

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Popular culture embraces all levels of society. It involves elite groups of intellectuals, as well as the masses. Simply put, popular culture is anything that appeals to a wide variety of people. Moreover, popular culture frequently acts as a mirror and reflects the values, concerns, and perceptions of society. Normally popular culture is not intended to insult people, but this can happen and did in the 1920's.

This paper will focus on some of the more significant aspects of the popular culture of the twenties. It will give the reader some insight to the popular events of the era, and explain how each area of popular culture reflected or affected American life and thought during the twenties.

One of the most well known phenomenon of the 1920's was the automobile. By the end of the decade, the automobile had become an indicator of social position. Cars became more and more commonplace in the 1920's. Two primary reasons for this were improved technology and Henry Ford. By the 1920's Ford had perfected mass production of cars. He accomplished this through the use of wage increases and Frederick Taylor's scientific management theories. Factories were better organized with continuous production stemming from moving assembly lines and a steady flow of raw materials. Concerning higher wages, Ford's philosophy was that high wages increased buying power, which increased demand, which increased production, which decreased unit costs. This decreased unit cost is exactly what Henry Ford
achieved. He produced a car for the masses. Before World War I, there were 500,000 cars made annually in the United States, but by the end of the 1920's, there were 23 million cars and 3 million trucks. Productivity had risen more than 1300 percent between 1900 and 1926. This was truly a reflection of the Coolidge prosperity that was occurring. For example, between 1920 and 1926 all manufacturing output rose by 64 percent; between 1922 and 1927 the economy grew 7 percent as a whole.

As a result of mass production the price of the Model T dropped from $845 in 1908 to $290 in 1927. This made it affordable to most people, but for some it meant sacrificing food and clothing. As a result of the increased demand for automobiles, the expansion of credit and installment plans was necessary. In earlier decades, a man was looked down upon if he bought a luxury with credit. During the 1920's, however, credit was almost necessary in order to increase sales of cars.

In addition to credit, other avenues were available to increase car sales. The most significant means was advertising. It became especially important in 1927. In 1927 the market for cars had nearly been saturated. Advertising had played a major role in creating mass consumption in the 1920's, and in the latter part of the decade it began to stress the need for style and comfort in a car. As a result, the Model T was becoming less popular. People were buying Chevrolets because they were colorful, stylish, better mechanically, and nearly as cheap as the Model T. The decrease in sales forced Henry Ford to change his ways. In May 1927 he shut down his Model T production line and in November of the same year came out with a much nicer Model A.

To promote his new product, Ford ran an elaborate five day advertisement. People had such faith in him that almost 500,000 Model A's were ordered,
sight unseen. The entire nation flocked to see exhibitions of the new model, and newspapers made headlines of the unveiling.

The preceding event demonstrates the tremendous effect that the car had on the personal lives of Americans in addition to its effects on the economy. The car had become the center of most people's lives. In a period where Americans were moving to cities to live or work, the car became a necessity. Many people lived on the outskirts of urban areas and needed transportation to and from work. But equally important was the need for people to get away from the crowded cities. The car provided the means for escape in a period where people had more leisure time than ever before. With the car, people could participate in recreation outside the cities and take vacations. This surge resulted in an increase in recreational facilities like state parks and forests. Other effects of this increased traveling were more and better highways (with the help of a gasoline tax) and an increase in restaurants, gas stations, and motels along the roads.

Yet, all effects of the auto were not positive. The car sometimes had a negative effect on church and home life. As a means of recreation and freedom, the car gave teenagers freedom from parents and all other watchful eyes. A youngster could drive to the next town and enjoy anonymity or park in a secluded area and "neck" the night away. For this reason, the car was sometimes known as a "house of prostitution on wheels." Another sinful use of the car was to take a drive with the entire family. This seems innocent enough, but not when many drives were taken on Sunday mornings. Despite its pitfalls, though, the car was undoubtedly an asset to the American people, business, and country as a whole.
Another area of popular culture which helps to demonstrate the atmosphere in the 1920's was music. Music was one of the forms of entertainment that lent its name to the era: the Jazz Age. Jazz music and imitations of it became the center of attention in the 1920's.

The origins of Jazz are debatable. The most commonly accepted explanation is that Jazz originated with the American Negro. More specifically, Jazz emerged from a combination of different styles including: the minstrel show, banjo music, ragtime, work chants on Southern plantations, and the Blues.

When it first began, Jazz was mostly concentrated in the South, especially New Orleans. New Orleans was very tolerant of all races, and an area called Storyville provided entertainment for anyone. In 1917 Storyville was closed. Soon after World War I, many blacks began moving towards the Northern cities. As a result, Jazz moved along the Mississippi River up to Chicago and into other areas. The Northern cities provided new opportunities for jazz musicians, mainly due to the prosperity of the times.

In Chicago, musicians, both black and white, worked and experimented with the music. Two of the more famous musicians were Bud Freeman and Louis Armstrong. Armstrong began his career with the Joseph "King" Oliver's Creole Jazz Band. This band helped to make Jazz the music of all Negros in Chicago. They had a style all their own, and they proved that Jazz could be arranged and played with discipline.

Although Chicago remained an important area for Jazz, New York was the main attraction for musicians. People like Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, and Count Basie went there. It seemed that Jazz had crowned itself the folk music of the big city. However, it is interesting to
note that, although Jazz had a solid position in Northern cities, many people disliked the associations it had with blacks and the lower classes. Many people felt that Jazz was socially degrading. This is very significant in that it shows the racism present in the United States in the 1920's. Although the Red Scare during World War I was fading early in the decade, one could still sense the prejudice of the times. Two primary examples of racism can be seen in the revival of the Ku Klux Klan and the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti, who were accused of stealing the payroll of a shoe factory and killing two men. Their conviction was a disgrace because the two men did not even closely fit the description of the robbers. Their only crime was that they were immigrants and therefore seen as being racially inferior to Native-born Americans.

The previous incident was unforgivable, but the music of the 1920's offered some consolation. It helped bridge the gap between whites and other ethnic groups, even if only slightly. The more Jazz persisted, the more people enjoyed it. This is primarily because Jazz was an expression of the times. It was energetic and full of the emotions of disillusionment. The 1920's was a time where old traditions were being broken and young people were protesting. Jazz was new, and it defied the constraints placed on individuals. It was spontaneous and lacked formality. Possibly most important of all, it was very natural in a mechanized environment.

During the 1920's, Jazz became known as anything that had the passionate sound of a saxophone and a bass fiddle. Jazz was becoming as diverse as day and night. There was "Hot Jazz" which emphasized loud, fast trumpet tunes, and then there was "Sweet Jazz" which focused on saxophones, pianos, and muted brass. Guy Lombardo helped to perfect
this latter style. Whichever style was played, people loved it as long as they could dance to it. As a matter of fact, the dancing craze was extremely important to the music industry, both recorded and live. Composers and musicians turned to big bands that could play difficult arranged music suitable for dancing and listening. New Orleans Jazz was fading, and complex arrangements were becoming the trend.

To appreciate the influence Jazz had on the 1920's, one need only look at some of the composers and musicians of the period. George Gershwin was greatly influenced by Jazz as can be seen in his famous piece "Rhapsody in Blue." Another piece of his work was "Somebody Loves Me" which together with its sentimentality made many a couple gaze into one another's eyes. As for big bands, the most successful was Paul Whiteman's. Whiteman was often known as the "King of Jazz" for his creation of symphonic jazz. His music was a representation of what people thought Jazz should be like. The masterpiece of his band is often considered to be Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" which he unveiled in New York in 1924.

John Alden Carpenter was another symphonic music composer. He was quite unlike Gershwin in that he stressed the anxiety of the era instead of sentimentality. Carpenter's works tended to represent a mechanized, pushy, urban society. This reflection of society demonstrates the sophistication of the music. Duke Ellington was one who moved away from the Blues and wrote songs like "Mood Indigo" and "Sophisticated Lady." Another great composer of the time was Jerome Kern who made ballad writing popular.

Although Jazz was the dominant music of the 1920's, other forms were also important because they reflected some individual perceptions.
of society. Two wonderful composers that come to mind are Charles Ives and Irving Berlin. Ives utilized American folk materials that reflected a loss of innocence and a search for the simple life of the past. Ives' music was difficult to understand and was only appreciated years later. In contrast, Irving Berlin was a popular composer who was more ragtime oriented. He was inspired by the city and its screams and cries. He wrote about the urban society that America had become.

Jazz spread its wings over almost all types of music in the 1920's. But there were other types of music that were not as complicated as those already mentioned but even more popular. These songs came from the Tin Pan Alley composers who wrote simple tuneful songs that kept up with the fads of the era. There were zany songs like "Yes, We Have No Bananas" and "The Farmer Took Another Load Away." Mammy songs such as "Carolina Mammy", and "I Want My Mammy" also became popular. Other types included girl songs, baby songs, telephone songs, and regional songs. All of these songs helped to show the rage for fun in America.

If music was any reflection of the times at all, it certainly was at the end of the decade when America was beginning to settle down. Popular songs appearing at this time were "Bye Bye Blackbird" and "My Blue Heaven" which was indicative of the goodness of marriage. As the times changed, American music changed right along with it.

Going hand in hand with the popular music in America was the dance craze. Music influenced the types of dances that were popular while the dance craze caused popular music to be danceable. For example, it was often said that Duke Ellington's music was made for dancing.

To appreciate the meaning of "dance craze," a list of popular dances is appropriate. It includes: the fox trot, one step, tango,
square dancing, the camel walk, the toddle, the black bottom, shimmy, varsity drag, and the Charleston. It seemed that everyone was dancing except the older generation who saw it as indecent. To them, the new cheek to cheek, embracing style to fast music was not proper. The churches stressed this point even more emphatically. Many churches declared dancing as "syncopated embracing." They were not just blaming the dances either; they also blamed Jazz. It was seen as immoral especially since the word "Jazz" itself has sexual connotations.

The Catholic Telegraph said,

"The music is sensuous, the embracing of partners, the female only half dressed, is absolutely indecent; and the notions - they are such as may not be described, with any respect for propriety, in a family newspaper. Suffice it to say that there are certain houses appropriate for such dances; but those houses have been closed by law."

It seemed as if the whole younger generation was corrupt. "Nice" girls had changed. They were smoking and drinking, and some were even removing their corsets at dances. Men were putting their bare hands on the backs of girls wearing backless dresses. At dances, both sexes were retiring to a dark secluded area or parked car for a bit of petting or necking. The following statement by Dr. Francis Clark of the Christian Endeavor Society reflects the emancipation that women were going through in the 1920's. He said, "indecent dance" was "an offense against womanly purity, the very fountain-head of our family and civil life."

Religious journals were very hard on modern dancing. Their plea was for the mothers and churches of these dancing children to save the young from destroying themselves.

Even with all the controversy surrounding it, dancing had become a part of life. Eventually, many churches dropped their ban on dancing and held their own dances to attract the youth. Schools were teaching
social dancing also. Moreover, hundreds of dance halls appeared across the United States. It was quite obvious that more people thought dancing was respectable. Two such people were Vernon and Irene Castle, a famous dance couple. They refined dancing and made it not only fun to do, but also beautiful to watch. They introduced such steps as the tango, the lame duck, and even their own Castle Walk. Another asset to dancing was Arthur Murray who appeared in New York in 1925. These people and many more contributed greatly to dancing and especially to the understanding and appreciation of it that was so desperately needed.

One area of popular culture that most people had no qualms about was radio. Before World War I, radio broadcasting was present, but it never became popular because people just saw it as a practical form of communication. However, Dr. Frank Conrad, a chief engineer at Westinghouse, had better ideas for radio such as entertainment. In 1920, he began broadcasting from his garage on Wednesdays and Saturdays. His show consisted of music, baseball scores, and election results. This was the beginning of modern radio. In 1920, Westinghouse started KDKA in Pittsburg and also began manufacturing radio equipment that anyone could use. Other radio stations were established in New York and California among others. Amazingly, at the start of 1922, there were four licensed stations while at the end of 1922, there were 576.

Broadcasting grew extremely rapidly. Churches, newspapers, colleges, and big businesses were all setting up stations. In 1922, WBAY, New York was started by AT&T. It was the first to incorporate commercial radio or payment for use. Later WEAF was started by Bell Corporation. Because of its wide range of entertainment, it soon became the most
popular station in the country. It was obvious that radio was evolving into a big business as well as a media for amusement. Entertainment alone could not sustain radio. It needed help, and advertising came to the rescue.

Advertising had not been very successful in earlier decades, but radio and the prosperity of the era launched it into one of the biggest businesses of the decade. Radio took advertising into the homes of consumers. Using this to their advantage, advertisers spiced up their advertisements. They played on the emotions of the public to persuade them. No longer did they use dull, factual advertising.

Another boost to both the radio and advertising industries came in 1926 when network broadcasting started with the formation of the National Broadcasting Company. The Columbia Broadcasting System was also created in the late 1920's. This centralization allowed several stations to carry the same programs to a large audience. It also created national commercials. By 1930, NBC and CBS carried advertisements into the homes of ten million people.

Why was advertising so effective? Primarily because radio seemed free as people listened to their favorite programs in their homes. During their programs, they were also frequently reminded that the products being advertised by the sponsors "make this program possible." As a result, radio advertising helped increase the sales of cars, home appliances, cigarettes, toothpaste, etc. The great prosperity of the 1920's could now be attributed to radio as well as the automobile.

While advertising was radio's biggest contribution to the economy, radio sales were also significant. Radio sales were $1 million in 1920, but by 1925 they were $400 million. By 1929 sales were
$842,543,000. The total increase in radio sales from 1922 to 1929 was 1400 percent. This is due to the fact that mass production enabled almost any American to purchase a radio. This again was a sign of the era of Coolidge prosperity where from 1922 to 1927, America's purchasing power rose by 29 percent or more per year.

Radio as big business helped shape America, but radio as entertainment amused the public. People enjoyed radio because it was live and personal. It came into the home and treated the listener as if he alone were the audience. This aspect is important when one considers that America was becoming more and more urbanized, and people were losing their individuality. Moreover, radio could take worldwide news into homes that were far away from cities. Radio was for everyone; it was democratic.

Programming on radio was very diversified. It ranged anywhere from exercise programs to dance concerts to sports presentations to presidential elections. Continuous programming was tried but failed because shows were of poor quality until networking arrived. However, radio programming soon became dictated by the number of people who listened, not necessarily on the quality of the program.

One of the major areas covered by radio was politics. People were especially interested in election results. In 1920, the Cox-Harding election results were given by KDKA. The political conventions of 1924 were broadcast also, as people found it much more convenient to sit at home and listen than to push their way to Madison Square Gardens. Besides, they could always turn the dial if they became bored with it. Another unique use for radio was the first political speech given exclusively for radio by Robert LaFollette. He was a very ineffec-
tive speaker on radio, though. On the other hand, Woodrow Wilson used radio to broadcast an Armistice Day message to three million people in 1923 with very positive results.

Possibly more popular than politics was sports on the air. In 1921 the Dempsey-Carpentier fight was broadcast by RCA. The 1922 World Series was also broadcast and so was the 1927 Rose Bowl. The highpoint of sports announcing, however, came when sixty million people listened to the 1927 rematch between Dempsey and Tunney. In the seventh round, Dempsey knocked Tunney down but did not return to his corner right away. The count was delayed, and Tunney got up on the ninth count. During the Long Count, seven people died of heart attacks while listening on the radio. In light of these events, one must remember that sports could not have been exciting without announcers. Most announcers developed their own personalities, and the best known and most admired was Graham McNamee. By 1925, he was the world's most popular announcer.

In addition to sports, music was also very popular. Many popular orchestras performed live on radio and displayed their talents. Some performers were Roxy and His Gang and The Happiness Boys. Two of the more popular singers were Rudy Valee and the Cliquot Club Eskimos. One can see the rising popularity of music in the 1920's by looking at the programming of some larger stations like WEAF, WJZ in New York, and WGN in Chicago. On the average they had 56 talk hours, 42 hours of serious music, and 259 hours of jazz or popular music.

One final area of radio was radio shows and comedians. The American public began to change its lifestyle because of radio. People were planning their evenings around their favorite shows. They loved to listen to Amos 'n' Andy, Fred Allen, Jack Benny, Bing Crosby, and Kate
Radio was particularly popular among the masses because the programs were family oriented. They involved no sex and therefore gained a much greater appreciation than the movies in the same period. One might even conjecture that radio helped keep the family together during a time when old traditions were breaking down.

Movies, like radio, became a big business in the 1920's. The combination of technology, mass production, mass consumption, and increased leisure time helped to shape the movies. Before the 1920's, movies were short and crude and showed such things as life in the big city or ghetto or life as a policeman. As strangely as it may seem, these movies were very popular. They were mostly enjoyed by the lower classes of immigrants and working people because this was one of the few entertainments the poor could afford. Besides, the immigrants could understand silent movies.

Possibly the best known silent actor of the early movies was Charlie Chaplin. He depicted the urban life of the poor in his portrayal of the tramp. Chaplin loved this character because he disliked the rich and had compassion for the poor. The tramp represented "ordinary people." Furthermore, most of Chaplin's films were consistently critical of the middle and upper classes. In 1925, Chaplin made The Gold Rush, a comedy that mocked Coolidge prosperity. It was a touching story about the stupidity of searching for riches. The little tramp searched for love for awhile and then began searching for gold. When he finally found himself rich, he also found himself without any friends.

Chaplin may be considered atypical of the times because he was so against material riches. But his movies reflected how society was becoming more concerned about big business and prosperity than they were
about each other. His movies also incessantly reminded people that the common man deserved respect and should not be looked down upon. This was particularly important in a period where prejudices were high and the United States was passing laws to restrict the number of immigrants.

The life of the poor, however, was of no interest to the middle class. They wanted to see something different. They wanted to watch movies about the lives of the rich. The movie companies were quick to oblige. A large portion of the movies portrayed the life of the rich as glamorous yet often times unhappy. These movies gave the middle class a life of luxury to fantasize about.

The movie screen was not the only place where fantasy was carried into the minds of viewers. To capitalize on the tremendous demand for movies, movie theatres in residential areas and movie palaces in big cities arose. They attempted to imitate the popular movies by having crystal chandeliers, thick carpet, plush seats, water fountains, oil paintings, fancy furniture, ushers dressed in uniform, and much more. When one visited a palace, he felt like a king and was treated as a king. He was pampered, even if only for a few hours. For this reason, it might follow that movie theatres formed a democracy. Frequently, both the rich and poor stood in line, paid the same prices, and enjoyed the same leisure. For a short while, there seemed to be no class distinctions.

One must realize that audiences did not just watch movies of fantasy, but they began to shape their morals, manners, dress, attitudes, etc., by what they saw on the screen. This was exactly the intent of filmmaker Cecil B. DeMille. His films greatly reflected the changes that
were occurring in the 1920's and may have even been somewhat responsible for the sexual changes. Regardless of either, DeMille attracted thousands of viewers, and history reminds us that sex was the most important feature of his movies.

One impact DeMille had was his new meaning for the word "sleep." It no longer meant "to go to sleep." The titles of his movies were as arousing as their content. Two of them were *Forbidden Fruit* and *The Golden Bed*. Because of DeMille's sinfulness, various women's clubs protested avidly. DeMille wanted no hard feelings, so he created *The Ten Commandments*. It was a masterpiece, but even it contained sex. His movie showed all the sin in life that went against the Commandments. His reasoning was that if sin was to be avoided, then one must know what sin exists in the world.

Although DeMille seemed preoccupied with sex, especially his bathroom scenes which showed both thighs and breasts, he was determined to have Hollywood dictate fashion. To accomplish this, he hired the best hair and clothes designers and make-up experts possible. DeMille was a unique man and very individualistic. His movies had the luxury and moral freedom that many Americans longed for and several attempted to obtain.

Because of the tremendous effect movies had on the public, movie production became a big business. At the end of World War I, the movie industry was the fifth largest in the country. From then on, profit making was the ultimate goal. Although the potential of movies as an art form was remarkable, for the most part there was no interest in it. Movie distributors wanted movies that would attract large crowds. The outcome was a series of conventions that stressed the values and interests
of the audience. This meant having the same well known and well liked actors in several movies and using the same storylines over and over again. Some of the more popular topics were westerns, love, crime, and sex. Another method used was to give the audience a fantasy such as "poor boy finds fortune" or "young girl meets Mr. Right." There were just certain formulas that worked.

The effect of these tested formulas was simple: an aristocracy formed in Hollywood. Stars were born and idolized by millions of Americans. Just to name a few, there was Clara Bow, also known as the "IT" girl for her sex appeal, Rudolph Valentino, Westerner Buck Jones, and Greta Garbo. Unfortunately, it was almost impossible for these stars to keep their personal lives private. The public wanted to hear all the news they could about the stars they admired. This worried movie producers, but they used it to their advantage.

In the early 1920's, churches had been extremely critical of the sexual content of movies. To calm the churches and save the reputations of actors, William H. Hays was given the responsibility of overseeing the lives of actors in Hollywood, both on and off screen. Rules were laid down. A kiss on screen could not run for more than seven feet of film. Moral clauses were put in the contracts of actors saying they could be fired or fined for not behaving themselves. This was a burden to film makers, but it did not stop the daring topics of movies. Movies still freely approached divorce, sex, prostitution, crime, gangsters, etc. The impact of movies might best be summed up by Lewis Jacobs. He wrote, "Films featured the lust for youth, fed the romantic desire for freedom..., and showed that money talked, clothes were an index to position in life..., material success mattered."
Although silent movies were still popular in the mid 1920's, some film makers felt that movies could be more exciting and attract even larger audiences. For this reason, several companies experimented with sound. In 1927, Warner Brothers came out with a full length movie with sound. It was The Jazz Singer starring Al Jolson. The movie was a success and forced other production companies to convert to sound. At first they resisted, but admissions in 1929 took any doubt from their minds. In 1927, silent movies brought in $60,000,000; in 1929, talking movies brought in $110,000,000.

Sound was so successful because it made movies much more realistic. Every action was now related to or could be explained by a sound instead of a subtitle. One major effect of sound was that acting changed. No longer was there a need for exaggerated expressions and emotions. Moreover, an actor's voice became very important. Many film stars were destroyed because of their style of speech. For example, Clara Bow had a rich Brooklyn accent which ruined her career. Nevertheless, sound was the greatest invention since the automobile and radio. To the dismay of some and the delight of many, sound brought more crowds, more profits, more stars, more sex, more adventure, and more big business, but it still had not brought art.

While the movies of the 1920's were creating their sexual revolutions, there was yet another 'revolution' occurring: the emancipation of women. Between 1910 and 1920, women were mostly the leaders of social reform movements. They wanted to bring men up to their social status. However, in the 1920's the roles of women changed. During World War I, women were left alone while the men went to war. Most of them supported and worked for their country; they learned to be
aggressive. In particular, the flapper emerged as the intelligent free spirited woman who wanted the same freedom men enjoyed. Although the flapper was not typical of all women in the United States, she did symbolize that women were no longer just homemakers. Women were an integral part of society, and their new attitudes were causing a big stir.

The primary causes of the changing roles of women were not reform movements but rather industrialization, urban living, and education among others. With the move to urban areas, cities became much more crowded. Dwellings were expensive, and this forced many people to live in smaller homes. As a result, a large family became more of an economic burden than an asset as they were on a farm. To avoid losing their economic status, the urban middle classes began to limit family size. By the 1920's, this trend had spread to the working classes. From 1900 to 1930, the size of a family went from 4.6 persons to 3.8. This decrease can be attributed to the new sexual attitudes of the era and the increased use of contraception.

In addition to smaller family size, technology helped to relieve women of household chores. As appliances like washers and electric irons became more common, they lightened the amount of time spent on housework. Also, store bought clothes and canned foods were a tremendous asset.

With an increased availability of education in the 1920's, children spent more time at school and found new friends away from home. This greatly contributed to the leisure time of women. They had more time to educate themselves and become individuals. For many women this created the opportunity to seek employment. At the end of the decade,
more than 3.75 million women were employed which for many led to an increase in spending money. As a result, women were steadily becoming the consumers of the 1920's. They did most of the household buying, paid the bills, and were even consulted on the purchases of many durables such as cars and homes. Manufacturers, in turn, became concerned with making their products appeal to women. Both the automobile and cigarette industries began to direct specific advertisements towards women.

In a male dominated society, another area that women began to invade was the stock market. It was not only women from the upper classes, either; both professional and unprofessional women were investing. One expert is noted for saying that non-professional women in stocks had grown "from less than a two percent to a thirty five percent factor of the huge army that daily gambles in the stock market." Waitresses, cleaning women, women farmers, and cooks were all participating, and some were collecting a fortune.

Despite the increased desire for independence in the 1920's, the security of marriage and love was still a major goal of most women, and many were also demanding satisfaction in marriage. Many men could not accept this change, and one impact was a rising divorce rate. In 1920 there were 13.4 divorces per 100 marriages while there were 17.0 in 1930. As an alternative to divorce, "companionate" marriage was introduced. It was a trial marriage that would let both partners be free to do as they please. It would allow for more privacy and greater expression of individual tastes. It appeared that marriage as a sacred institution was being pushed aside.

The emergence of the idea of living together reflects how the lifestyles of women were changing. It must again be emphasized that
not all women were taking part in these changes. It was primarily the younger generation because the older generation still felt that a woman's place was in the home as a happy homemaker. The flapper as the modern woman, however, had different ideas; she wanted life to be full of fun and adventure.

The flapper of the 1920's never seemed to be afraid but always sure of herself. She was "shameless, selfish, and honest," as an ex-flapper once said. Suprisingly enough, these were her virtues.

In a man, she never looked for promises, just good fun and conversation. This is a primary example of the new sexual freedom that evolved for the younger generation.

One man that was partly responsible for the Flaming Youth of the 1920's was Sigmund Freud. Freud professed that one should not feel guilty about sex because it was natural and healthy. According to Freud, the repression of sexual feelings led to tension and guilt in itself. Freud treated sex as a science, and this is what the flapper liked about him. The flapper did not want lasting romantic love, she wanted variety, sex, and excitement.

There were many avenues to sexual freedom in the 1920's. In an urban society, it was easy to get away from one's family and do as he pleased without anyone knowing about it; anonymity was possible. The car was also an aid to freedom. The increase in the number of people who attended college was another factor contributing to increased sexual freedom. In 1890, 84,000 women attended college while in 1924, there were 450,000 women there. There was much more freedom at college; it offered parties where necking and petting were the main attractions. Women were finding out that they enjoyed kissing men even if they did not
plan on marrying them. To them, it was becoming a natural inclination.

There were numerous other factors which helped launch the sexual revolution such as prohibition, movies, sex magazines, and contraceptives. Even as late as 1927, birth control was still outlawed, but it was readily available to those who wanted it. Margaret Sanger was a reformer who pushed for birth control. She was determined to educate both middle and working class women on contraception. Many men had already been introduced to the condom during the war, and Sanger wanted women to know that it safely allowed sexual freedom. Her fight led many women to realize that sex could be pleasurable. No longer was the woman a sexual object; she was a sexual partner.

Along with sexual freedom there were many other changes occurring for women. One significant change was fashion. Women became slimmer and wore clothes that flattered their figure. The underwear industry changed dramatically. Thick cotton was replaced by thin silk. Women wore sheer hose instead of black. Some women even rolled their hose below their knees while they were dancing. The brassiere was developed, and many women stopped wearing corsets. Dresses were straight for a boyish figure, and skirts were well above the ankle exposing the leg. A pump style shoe replaced those which laced up the ankle.

Hairstyles were also changing. In 1918, short hair was the sign of a radical. In the 1920's, however, short, bobbed hair became more respectable. Hair was often cut close to the head so that a simple tight fitting hat could be worn.

Stemming from the new trends in fashion, other industries also flourished during this time period. The cosmetic industry went from $90 million in 1923 to $193 million in 1929. By 1929 the perfume
industry produced more than 2500 different brands. As a result of these increases, the demand for beauty parlors also increased. In 1917, only two beauticians paid taxes, but by 1927 there were 19,000 tax paying individuals and companies in the profession.

Perhaps the new sexuality of the 1920's can best be summed up in the following example concerning the use of rouge. In 1919, a Ladies Home Journal ad had little to say about rouge. But in 1929, the same journal advertised this about rouge, "It's comforting to know that the alluring note of scarlet will stay with you for hours."

All of these changes in the American woman did not go unchallenged. Many religious societies were formed to help stop the immorality of the youth. They spoke out against the fashions of the day which to some were next to nudity. Several states even introduced dress codes for women. Ohio tried to pass a law to stop the sale of any "garment which unduly displays or accentuates the line of the female figure." Also, the bill would not let any woman over fourteen wear "a skirt which does not reach to that part of the foot known as the instep."

Even with all the uproar concerning the Flaming Youth, the revolution could not be stopped. The older generations were tired of watching the youth have all the fun, so they joined in on the excitement of drinking, smoking, parties, and speakeasies. It seemed that all old values had been thrown out the door without any new ones to replace them. Had sex replaced romantic love? Joseph Wood Krutch said, "If love has come to be less often a sin, it has also come to be less often a supreme privilege." Sex alone could not make one happy. Everyone needed some values to live by.
By the end of the decade, the flapper and Flaming Youth were disappearing but only because the new sexual freedom had become an established norm. Women especially were becoming more sophisticated. They were a combination of the old and the new generations. They did not give up the freedom they gained in the 1920's, but they were learning to live by some meaningful values that were created in the decade.

Of all the crazes that swept through the country in the 1920's, very few were accepted and enjoyed by the entire population. However, the rise of sports provided a form of entertainment for all. Spectator sports such as baseball and football allowed people to sit back, relax, and root for their favorite hometown teams while sports such as softball allowed one to become an active participant. Sports had become the American pastime. Even the middle and upper classes were participating in sports just like the working class. As such, there had evolved a democratic sports phenomenon.

What exactly spurred this craze on? One reason is that more recreational facilities such as public tennis courts and golf courses were being built. National parks also expanded allowing people more space to participate in activities. Furthermore, these facilities would never have been useful if it were not for the automobile. The car enabled people to travel farther distances to use these facilities and to view spectator sports.

Another reason sports became more popular was the rise of college football. As a result of the increased availability of education and the prosperity of the times, more people were attending college than ever before. The increase in students led to an increase in attendance
at football games. This in turn led to investments in new football stadiums. Ohio State University, for example, constructed one that held 64,000 people. These new facilities offered enjoyment to 20 to 60 million viewers a year.

Football was no longer just for college students; it was amusement for the masses. It followed then, that football became extremely commercialized. Some people disliked college football being a profit making event. They felt that colleges were attaining their reputation from football instead of education. Their protests were overshadowed, however, by the fact that gate receipts provided financing for other minor sports that could never support themselves.

College football was even attracting more spectators than major league baseball and for this reason was sometimes called the "national religion." This is understandable when one looks at the most outstanding football player of the 1920's, Harold "Red" Grange. He played at the University of Illinois where most people thought he was a team in himself. He averaged 132 yards a game. People marveled at him, and in 1925 he appeared on the cover of Time magazine. After college, he played for the Chicago Bears. In two years, he made one million dollars and eventually found his way to a $300,000 movie contract.

While Grange was making a name for himself in football, Babe Ruth was doing the same in baseball. He was the man who helped keep baseball the "national game" in a time of declining popularity. This decline was created by the emergence of several other sports. It can also be seen in the relation between the number of people who lived in the city and the number who attended the games. Between 1920 and 1930, there was a population increase of twenty percent while the attend-
ance at major league games increased by only ten percent.

In a field of strong competition between different sports, baseball held its own. Newspapers were a tremendous help as they expanded their sports sections with numerous baseball headlines. Babe Ruth was the other stepping stone. He revolutionized the game. Before him, the name of the game was "play it safe." Most players were content with base hits or bunts. Ruth wanted to be a home run hitter. In 1920, the Boston Red Sox refused to pay Ruth his salary demand of $20,000, so they sold him to the Yankees for $400,000. Ruth did not disappoint them as he hit 54 home runs and had a batting average of .347 that season. In 1921, Ruth led the Yankees to a pennant championship with 59 home runs. The fans went crazy over him and cheered for a home run at every game. Because of this enthusiasm by the fans, the batting averages of most players was raised significantly. Babe Ruth was mostly responsible and became a national hero almost overnight.

Another sport that changed drastically in the 1920's was boxing. At one time, boxing had been banned. In the 1920's, it became a respectable sport attended by the working, middle, and upper classes. Women even attended the crowd cheering event. Championship fights gained national attention beginning with a fight between Jess Willard and Jack Dempsey in 1919. Willard was as big and strong as an ox. Dempsey, on the other hand, had been a scrawny teenager who taught himself to fight. He was not big, but he was like an animal in the ring. Dempsey won the fight which took in $452,000. Boxing, with the help of radio, was on its way to becoming a big business.

Although Dempsey dominated the sport and attracted $1 million a fight, he was not very well liked. There had been rumors that he
dodged serving for the United States in World War I. To many, he was un-American. An expression of this feeling occurred when Dempsey fought a Frenchman named Georges Carpentier. The majority of the American crowd cheered for Carpentier.

After several more fights, Dempsey became a movie and vaudeville star. He made a fortune without even boxing for three years. Eventually there was pressure on him to fight Harry Wills, a black man. Because racial tension was high in the 1920's, Dempsey fought Gene Tunney instead. Tunney was a well educated man who fought by the book. In 1926, Dempsey was outclassed by Tunney in a fight that broke all gate records. In 1927, they fought again at Chicago in front of 145,000 people with gate receipts of $2,650,000. Tunney was knocked down, but Dempsey did not return to his corner right away. Tunney was able to recover and win the match.

Tunney was champion, but the title meant little to him. He had come from the lower class and had always dreamed of being rich. After making $2 million, he retired from boxing. For many, with Dempsey none, the excitement had been lost in boxing, and it was never as popular in the late 1920's.

In addition to the major spectator sports in America, outdoor recreational activities were much more common in the 1920's. Tennis and golf were two sports that were both spectator and participant. As for tennis, the star of the period was William Tilden. Tilden was the first American to win the Wimbledon title, and he dominated the game for six years. He was a competitive athlete and a gentleman on the court. Other notable players were Suzanne Lenglen and Helen Wills. These women were strong athletes, not at all the "delicate"
women of the past. These three players led the way for both men and women to play. By 1920, there were 294 tennis clubs; by the end of the decade, there were twice as many. It has been estimated that three to four million people were playing tennis, about one million on public courts.

Golf was another form of recreation for thousands of men and women. Before the 1920's was played mostly by the upper class or businessman. If one was a member of a golf club and could golf fairly well, then he was seen as climbing the social ladder. This in turn made it much easier to climb the business ladder. Golf did become more democratic in the 1920's, though, as the working man began to experience the pleasure of the game. In 1916, there were 743 courses while by 1930, there were 5856. Golf was very expensive to play, and for many it remained a spectator sport.

Walter Hagen was a fine golfer in the 1920's, but even better was Bobby Jones. He was considered the best American golfer of the decade. His talent did not come naturally to him, though. As a child and young adult, he had a terrible temper, and he often lost control on the course. As he matured, he learned to control his temper and became known as the perfect "mechanical" golfer. Although he remained an amateur golfer, he earned the respect of thousands.

The list of recreational sports moves on almost endlessly. Outdoor sports such as hunting and fishing, hiking and camping were all found to be a pleasurable relief from the crowded city life. Softball offered a more relaxed alternative to baseball. Bowling, badminton, croquet, field hockey, and horse racing all increased in popularity during the era. Horseback riding and polo were popular among the
upper classes who had access to them. These games helped keep the middle class separated from the working class in a world where most activities were available to all.

One final recreation that was extremely significant was swimming. The beaches in the 1920's were crowded with both men and women. Although bathing suits were not very revealing, they were much more daring than ever before. The trip to the beach allowed women to assert to themselves and others that their status in life had undoubtedly changed. Women were no longer afraid to dress appropriately for a sport and enjoy what they were doing.

The "ballyhoo" or excitement over sports and recreation was what kept many Americans going. Fans better appreciated sports because they were participating themselves. Furthermore, sports gave millions of Americans heroes to look up to. This is especially important in an industrial society where people were losing their individualism and needed to identify with someone.

As a result of the ballyhoo of the era, life was much more fast paced than ever before. One reflection of this was the stream of fads that popped up one after the other. A major reason for this is that people were more diversified. They could talk about a boxing match one night, Wall Street stock prices the next, and a flight across the Atlantic another night. There was always something happening around the world, and people longed to keep their own lives in motion. The fads gave them something to do and talk about, and in a time of disillusionment, it was nice to have something raise their spirits.

What was all the excitement about? Crosswords is a good place to begin. Crossword puzzles had been in the New York World newspaper on
Sundays since 1913. In 1924, something unique appeared: the crossword puzzle book. Richard Simon and his partner Schuster had started a small publishing company. One day, Simon called his aunt. In casual conversation, she mentioned that it might be a good idea to have a crossword puzzle book. Simon was intrigued. A day later, he talked with some puzzle creators about the possibility of a book, and they all decided to contribute. The first issue had only 3600 copies. To make things worse, Simon found it difficult to find store owners who would sell the book. The biggest order Simon received was 25, and that was from a friend. It did not take long to realize that everyone had been wrong. The books sold like hotcakes and became a national fad. The Crossword book eventually sold two million copies.

Although the crossword fad lasted awhile, most other fads died as quickly as they came. One such game was Mah Jongg which originated from a Chinese game. It was developed by Joseph P. Babcock. The United States first received the game in San Francisco when it was imported by W. A. Hammond in 1922. The game spread and disappeared very quickly.

Other fads were numerous in the 1920's. Cults, seances, ouija boards, and Coueism all gained popularity mainly because so many people were losing faith in their beliefs. Coueism was a prime example. It was not a religion but similar to one. Emil Coué was a Frenchman who taught that the mind had power over the body. His philosophy was self-help by suggestion. His teaching was: "Day by day, in every way, I am getting better and better." Coueism did not sweep the country, but it did reflect the fading convictions to traditional church values in some parts of the country.
Additional fads of the 1920's included: goldfish swallowing, marathon dancing, Babhitt-spotting (made popular by Sinclair Lewis' small town, money hungry businessman), flagpole sitting, bathing beauty contests, and auction bridge. Flagpole sitting was particularly popular. Alvin Shipwreck Kelly showed how easy it was to become a hero when he sat on a flagpole for 23 days and seven hours. The above fads help to show not only the need people had for fun but also the desire people had for success.

Clearly bringing out both of these points was the Florida fever of the 1920's. A man named Carl G. Fisher loved Miami, Florida. He and his partners went on a venture and developed the land and beaches and drained the swamps. Florida became a gold mine; people flocked there like never before. In 1920, Miami had a population of 30,000. By 1924, it was 60,000. The influx of people was so great that neither the city or utility companies could keep up with the expansion. As a result, land prices were rising every day. In 1924, land near Miami cost $20,000. A buying rampage soon developed. People bought land one day and sold it the next at a profit. Many people were so hungry for land in Florida that they purchased it from blueprints, often to find that it was swampland.

The rage for Florida was halted in 1926 when a hurricane struck Miami and killed 400 people. Miami became the poorest city in the country while the rest of the nation enjoyed Coolidge prosperity. Miami was important for several reasons, however. It signified the strong commitment people had to business and success. They believed in the prosperity which allowed them to own land and speculate with it. In contrast, Florida offered many people an escape from Coolidge
prosperity and crowded cities. In the 1920's, it was possible to hop in one's car, drive to Florida, and enjoy the warm climate. Florida had a significant impact on the nation as a whole also. It led the way for the development of suburbs in major cities and helped create the real estate boom of the late 1920's.

It has been seen that America was extremely susceptible to fads. In light of this, it is no surprise that newstand literature became increasingly popular. These items included newspapers, tabloids, pulps, and magazines.

Before the war, magazines and newspapers had not been widely read. In the 1920's, however, people were better educated, and more people could read. As a result, tabloids became very popular. The New York Daily News began in 1919 and helped increase the trend in tabloids. New York alone had three tabloids in the mid 1920's with 1.6 million readers. Tabloids were much more successful than regular newspapers primarily because they were full of sensationalism and muckraking. Moreover, tabloids had big print and used pictures to describe many events. This allowed those people who could not read to have some type of affordable entertainment.

Conventional newspapers began to realize that entertainment was the key to success. They began to imitate the tabloids by incorporating comics, puzzles, gossip columns, and sensational stories about scandals, disasters, murders, and fads. Newspapers also found that the public liked to hear about one thing at a time. Therefore, if something exciting happened, the newspapers would cover it from start to finish.

This type of reporting was exemplified in the Scopes trial. This trial concerned the changing views on religion that occurred in
the 1920's. There had been several scientific findings that came into conflict with the teachings of the Bible. As a result, there was a division into Fundamentalists and Modernists. Fundamentalists believed entirely in the words of the Scriptures. Modernists, on the other hand, used science to explain the words in the Bible. The two schools came to a clash in the Scopes trial.

In Tennessee, a bill had been passed forbidding evolution to be taught. John Thomas Scopes tested the law by teaching evolution in a biology class. He was arrested. William Jennings Bryan was the lawyer for the prosecution, and Clarence Darrow was Scopes' attorney. The trial became a circus with hot dogs and refreshments being sold. Over one hundred newspaper men covered the story in its entirety. Scopes was found guilty and fined.

Although the Scopes trial was significant because of its subject matter, it was also important because it showed how the sensationalism of newspapers could turn almost anything into a piece of entertainment for the masses. One might think that newspapers just gave the public what they wanted, but they often gave them more than they needed. It was amazing how excited Americans could become over distasteful stories about crime and murder.

Another important fact concerning newspapers was that they became a big business. Newspapers consolidated, overpowering smaller papers and lessening competition. Many major cities such as St. Louis and Detroit only had one newspaper. This switch allowed articles to be syndicated and sent from one end of the United States to the other. The move to big business also reflected the end of the earlier progressive era. Newspapers became more conservative and objective in their
reporting because they did not want to cause dissension among their readers which would allow for greater competition.

Not only did the newspaper industry evolve into big business, the magazine industry did too. One reason for this rise was increased sensationalism. Another reason was increased advertising. Magazines aided the advertising industry by reaching the multitudes. By the same token, advertising provided magazines with the revenues necessary to operate.

Unlike newspapers, magazines were extremely diversified. Some of the more serious magazines were the Saturday Evening Post and Reader's Digest. Both of these contained fiction and articles that reflected the opinions of the writers. Other magazines like the New Republic reflected attitudes towards politics. Another significant magazine was the American Mercury. It was put out by H. L. Mencken and spoke against those things that suppressed the freedom of Americans. The New Yorker was started by Harold Ross. It was a metropolitan magazine in a small town style. For quite some time it was a flop, but eventually it turned into one of the most well written magazines of the decade.

Other types of magazines flourished in the 1920's. There were sex magazines which were more suggestive than they were explicit. Confession magazines were also suggestive, but most of their stories had moral endings. True Story came out in 1919 and had 300,000 readers by 1923 and two million by 1926. Movie magazines were also a craze as fans wanted to know everything they could about their favorite stars.

Finally, pulp magazines became increasingly popular in the late 1920's. There was no need for individuality in pulp writing. Editors
just wanted the same types of stories over and over again. Much like
the movies, pulps became a form of mass production. There were four
standard topics for pulps: Westerns, Love stories, Detective stories,
and Adventure stories.

There was yet another form of reading entertainment that prevailed
in the 1920's. This was the comic strip. Just as many of the popular
magazines reflected the changes in society, so did the comics. There
were "family" strips such as "The Nebbs", "Bungle Family", and
"Gasoline Alley" which was about suburban family life. There were
"kid" comics like "Little Mary Mixup" and "Little Orphan Annie."
"Girl" strips also appeared and reflected images of the modern inde-
pendant woman. Some of these were "Tillie the Toiler", "Flapper Fanny",
and "Dumb Dora." Another strip which featured the Flaming Youth, parties,
and fads was "Etta Ketta."

All of the preceding examples of newstand literature are only
a small portion of those which appeared in the 1920's. Every form
was unique, yet they all tended to reflect the same attitudes and
lifestyles that developed in the era.

The literature of the 1920's, like other forms of popular culture,
helped to reflect American thought. This is seen in two of the best
sellers of the decade. A book called Diet and Health was a best seller
for two and one half years. This book might represent the fact that
life was very fast paced, and to keep up, one had to stay in shape.
Another best seller was The Man Nobody Knows by Bruce Barton. What Barton
did was to sell religion through the use of business. Barton knew that
in the 1920's, big business was glorified, so he described Jesus Christ
as the best businessman ever to live. He wrote this about Christ,
"He picked up twelve men from the bottom ranks of business and forged them into an organization that conquered the world." Business was becoming the national religion.

The view of Barton was perhaps the typical view of the 1920's. There were, however, several atypical opinions that made themselves known. These views came from a group of individuals called intellectuals. These people wrote about the social and individual problems of values and morals. They were the protestors of the era. Most critics did tend to avoid any major issues in their protests against puritanism, big business, lack of appreciation of the fine arts, etc. This reflects the move away from the progressive era. In the 1920's, reform movements were no longer present. With the great economic progress of the period, most Americans were conservatives. They were content with the way they were living; the critics were not.

H. L. Mencken was the most outspoken of the critics. He did not believe that people could exist under such repressions as prohibition and censorship and still be called a democracy. Mencken even asked himself, "If you find so much that is unworthy of reverence in the United States, then why do you live here?" His reply, "Why do men go to zoos?"

Mencken and George Nathan edited the American Mercury. Through it, they wanted to tell their version of what "truth" meant. Some of the topics covered in their magazine were Prohibition, the Ku Klux Klan, and censorship, and Coolidge prosperity. Mencken loved to excite people and make them believe as he did. He probably felt himself superior to all others. For these reasons, he was able to give others the courage to stand up and protest. For example, Harper's
and *Forum* became increasingly critical of American life. *Scribner's* also created a stir because it was printing the writings of Hemingway.

Ernest Hemingway was controversial because his writings were full of stoicism; his resolution to the stupidity of life was death. Hemingway had served during World War I and was a hero. He loved the outdoors and loved to box, hunt, and fish. Therefore, he was a good authority for writing on death and violence. Most of his writings concerned the disillusionment with life. His message can be seen in *The Sun Also Rises* which was a story about people who lost faith in America and went to Europe.

Another man who was very close to Hemingway was F. Scott Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald also wrote about the disillusionment of life. After he graduated from Princeton, he wrote *This Side of Paradise*. It was a first hand account of all the flappers he knew and how the younger generation lived and enjoyed themselves. In this book, he described the youth as follows, "Here was a new generation...grown up to find all Gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken."

Fitzgerald did not just write about this lost generation; he was part of it. He and his wife loved to drink and throw parties and just have fun. He lived a life of luxury but had nothing to show for it. In 1923, he made $36,000, and by the end of the year it was all gone. In light of this, it is not difficult to understand why Fitzgerald grew discouraged with life. He was critical of himself and everyone around him. In 1925, he wrote *The Great Gatsby*, a story about bootleggers, speakeasies, and parties. It was a success with the critics, but it did not become a best seller.

Quite like Fitzgerald, there was another critic named Sinclair
Lewis. The primary tool used by Lewis was satire, and his primary target was the small town. In 1920, he wrote *Main Street*. It was about a small town called Gopher Prairie, and it showed that this town was deprived of life. It was culturally starved, and the people just merely existed. Lewis wondered how a town like Gopher Prairie could represent civilization when its inhabitants had to follow the dictates of others. Later, in 1922, Lewis wrote *Babbitt*. It was about a small businessman who was hungry for success and love.

Lewis portrayed American life as no other had done, and for this reason he became the most prominent writer of the 1920's. Even the public he criticized enjoyed reading his works because they saw themselves in his stories. This can be attributed to the fact that Lewis actually went through small towns and took detailed notes on how people lived.

The four writers just described were all individualists and usually never totally agreed with one another. They did agree, however, on one aspect: freedom. They all wanted freedom to do as they pleased, be it sexual freedom or political freedom. For many intellectuals, America did not offer the freedom they desired, so they left for other countries. After looking at the lives of these four men, one has to wonder whether freedom is such a good thing after all.

It has been emphasized throughout that in the 1920's values had changed from Puritan and Victorian values. Another significant area of popular culture that represents this idea is the theatre.

When movies appeared, they began to take over the commercial theatre, vaudeville, road shows, and others. It was not that movies had better storylines or better performers; it was just that movies could make a
more spectacular production and reach the masses at the same time. Theatres were limited in their audiences and were only able to survive in the larger cities.

One form of entertainment that nearly died due to movies was vaudeville. This was unfortunate as vaudeville was truly a democratic art that was simple amusement for all. Vaudeville acts performed in the cities where the greatest audiences were. Most of its stars were lower-middle class which allowed the urbanites to better appreciate their performance. There was one consolation for the loss of vaudeville; movies became its democratic successor.

Despite the reign of movies, tent shows or road shows remained somewhat popular in the 1920's. In 1925, there were 400 tent shows which combined, acted for an audience of 76,000,000. This was twice the audience of the legitimate theatre. This can easily be attributed to the small towns that the tent shows visited. Everywhere they went, the companies wrote shows that reflected the tastes of the community and did not try to force culture on them. Furthermore, they were sincere when they advertised that their shows were family oriented with no indecency.

Musical theatre is more of a fine art than the other types already mentioned. Due to the rise of movies, it lost much of its lower-middle class audience and became the popular culture of the elite upper class. The first type of musical theatre was the revue. Revues contained jokes, girls, song, and dance. Its sophistication accounted for its appeal in the 1920's. The revue greatly promoted its stars and introduced many popular songs. Some of the revues were Ziegfeld *Follies*, *Earl Carroll's Vanities*, and *The Music Box Revue*. 
In addition to revues, musical comedies attained popularity also. However, their content was not very impressive. Jerome Kern set out to change their style which he did in *Show Boat* in 1927. It was a musical play and very serious. After *Show Boat*, two styles of musical theatre emerged: the musical play and the new musical comedy. Some musical comedies were *The Connecticut Yankee* (1927) and *Present Arms* (1923). These musicals were superbly done, but Hollywood could still do them better. This is why the theatre became the entertainment of the elite. In light of this, the audience had higher expectations of the musicals, so the productions required much more talent and expertise. The refined audience had changed the course of musical theatre. The plays became much more beautiful and serious. They were no longer a means of escape; they now professed realism. They touched on the drama of social problems such as homosexuality and adultery. They could even criticize without causing too much of a stir. The changes that occurred in theatre helped to show the divisions that still existed in society and especially show the contempt for the lower classes.

Although the changes in theatre meant more divisions in society, there was still one phenomenon that united all Americans: hero worship. One might wonder why there was a need for heroes in a decade that offered Americans unprecedented prosperity. Several explanations can be given. Some people have said that many Americans felt guilty about the way their lives had changed. They had been disillusioned by such factors as war, scientific discoveries doubting their religious beliefs, trends in psychology that urged them to change their values, scandals in politics, and a wave of crime and murder.

Another reason for the uproar over heroes can be seen when we look
at the mass production society that existed. Many people worked in factories where they were just part of an assembly line. Furthermore, people became "inhabitants" of the large cities they lived in. Big business was being worshipped and overshadowing the small individual. Everyone needed to feel a sense of achievement in their lives. Unfortunately, many could not find it personally and had to turn to others. This led to the emergence of legendary sports heroes.

Sports involved a great amount of individual physical and mental effort. However, heroes were not always produced only because of their outstanding athletic abilities; the "ballyhoo" by newspapers and radio broadcasters also contributed. The media gave the audience what they wanted: excitement. Some of the more prominent heroes that they glorified were William Tilden, the tennis great, Red Grange, the greatest football player, Bobby Jones, the most proficient and dignified golfer the United States had seen, Jack Dempsey, the toughest boxer who had to earn the status of hero, and probably the most well-known hero, Babe Ruth.

Babe Ruth had grown up in poverty but was determined to become a success. He accomplished this goal by becoming the home run king of the 1920's. He played for the Yankees and increased their attendance so much that they had to build Yankee Stadium. It was dubbed "the house that Ruth built." In 1923, he helped the Yankees win the World Series. He seemed to be the perfect baseball player, but he was far from being the perfect person. He smoked, drank, swore, and loved a pretty lady. He had a terrible temper that cost him many baseball fines. He also seemed like a child the way he always drove around having fun. But Americans loved him. He was a normal human being
whose personality was not changed by fame; he remained an individual and did as he pleased: something many Americans longed to do.

Another hero who was not much different from the sports hero was Henry Ford. Ford left his Michigan home to seek adventure and become a mechanic. He loved to tinker and was always inventing something. He built his first car in 1893, and by 1903 he had presented the Model T. It was an instant success. There was one problem, though; it was too successful. For this reason, Ford became obsessed with mass production.

It was not long before Ford created the moving assembly line. It was a wonder for production output, but labor turnover increased unbelievably. Ford then decided to raise wages to five dollars a day. After this, men fought for a position in his plant.

The Model T was cheap and as a result, Ford jokes were created right and left. He had become a folk hero. Ford did not mind, though. Even though he was one of the richest men in the world, he was adored by most people. Ford was truly concerned for the common man as he always thought of himself as a common man. He was a self-made man who trained himself as a mechanic. He started at the bottom and rose to the top. On his way, he had never forgotten the small workingman's beliefs.

The fact that Henry Ford was a big businessman is not as important as the fact that he showed the world that a mechanized society could be very helpful. Moreover, he showed that people could always remain individuals in a mechanized society, just as he had done.

There was another man in the 1920's who also showed that man can be in control in a mechanized society; he was Charles Lindbergh. He was the first man to fly nonstop, alone, from New York to Paris. His
accomplishment by itself, however, did not make him the hero of all heroes.

He left on his flight on May 20, 1927 after being delayed by rain for several days. His takeoff was shaky, and it seemed as if he made it by sheer determination. On his trip, the weather he encountered was good in some places and so bad in others that he often thought of turning back. When he finally reached Paris, he was greeted by (what Lindbergh called the most dangerous part of the trip) thousands of spectators cheering him on. He was whisked off of his feet and carried away. All the while, his main concern was that his plane might be damaged.

When Lindbergh returned home, he was greeted by Army and Navy officers, President Coolidge, and his mother. President Coolidge called Lindbergh "a messenger of peace and good will" between America and Europe. Lindbergh then went to New York and was greeted by the biggest ticker tape parade in history.

Why exactly did Lindbergh become such a hero? After all, he was not the first to ever fly across the Atlantic. There are several reasons. Lindbergh was the epitome of the Horatio Alger character. Lindbergh was a common man with little money. He lived a clean life full of hard work as a flyer and pilot for the U. S. mail service. He started at the bottom and made it to the top by taking advantage of every opportunity that came his way. For these reasons, Lindbergh was also seen as the perfect example of the rugged individual. In an era where people were becoming less important as individuals and were becoming objects of mass manipulation, Lindbergh was different. He had been motivated by the impossible, loved a challenge, and was willing
to take risks. This is shown by the fact that he flew alone and was solely responsible for the flight.

Another reason Lindbergh was so special was his contribution to the understanding of the Machine Age. In a period of mass enterprise, Americans seemed to be crushed by machines. In industry people were simply part of the machinery instead of creative workers. Lindbergh showed Americans that they could live in harmony with machines. Man could be in control of machines and use them as a means of self-expression. As an example, Lindbergh had carefully planned his flight and set specific goals for himself. His goals were only possible, however, through the combination of his intelligence and the plane he operated; one depended on the other.

One of the more obvious reasons for Lindbergh's appeal was his image as the All-American boy. In an era of greed and sensationalism, Lindbergh did not drink or smoke, was not a ladies man, and did not let his fame carry him away. He refused to make movies and write fancy articles in newspapers. He stayed humble and wholesome and stayed out of trouble. He did not forget his admirers, though, as he often made exhibition flights. Moreover, even though he became extremely wealthy, he had earned the respect of an entire nation.

Finally, Charles Lindbergh was significant for one other reason. In a time where young people were being blamed for making a mockery out of traditional values, Lindbergh came to the rescue. He showed people that America was not all bad. He showed America that it was not his flight alone that made him a hero, but the American public was also responsible. It was their uproar and praise that made him famous. Americans had shown themselves that the most important things
in life were honesty, courage, and self-worth, not just self-indulgence. Americans realized that they had not lost their true values. They had placed one man, who was the perfect old fashioned gentleman, above every other event in America. No longer were political and economic problems, or crime the most intriguing aspects of life. Simple human existence was more important than anything else.

The 1920's was possibly the most exciting decade in the history of the United States. Life was constantly changing through education, industrialization, urbanization, new sexual attitudes, and the list goes on. The popular culture of the 1920's was also constantly changing and reflected these changes in lifestyles. Radio, movies, and automobiles are just a few areas of popular culture that reflected the Coolidge prosperity of the times; mass production and mass consumption had certainly become the trends of the decade. Moreover, the birth of the flapper was symbolic of the new morals and attitudes towards women and sexuality that appeared. If one knows nothing about the era, the popular culture of the 1920's offers a most highly accurate description of the infamous Golden Age.
NOTES


12. Ibid, p. 87.


15. The Unembarassed Muse: The Popular Arts in America p. 333.


25. That Jazz! p. 98.
27. Ibid, p. 151.
30. Only Yesterday p. 90.
31. The Twenties p. 17.
32. Only Yesterday p. 92.
33. Ibid, p. 92.
34. Perrett, Geoffrey America in the Twenties p. 236.
35. The Unembarrassed Muse: The Popular Arts in America p. 327.
36. The Twenties p. 17.
42. Ibid, p. 350.
43. Ibid, p. 231.
44. Twentieth Century America p. 266.
46. America Learns to Play p. 266.
47. Perrett, Geoffrey America in the Twenties p. 231.
50. Twentyventh Century America p. 347.
51. Ibid, p. 347.
52. Only Yesterday, p. 165.
55. The Lawless Decade p. 41.
57. The United States in the 20th Century p. 195.
60. The Lawless Decade p. 41.
61. The Unembarrassed Muse: The Popular Arts in America p. 393.
63. Perrett, Geoffrey America in the Twenties p. 223.
64. Goodman and Gatell America in the Twenties p. 75.
65. The Twenties: Fords, Flappers and Fanatics p. 50.
68. Perrett, Geoffrey America in the Twenties p. 228.
70. Ibid, p. 374.
71. Ibid, p. 375.
73. The Unembarrassed Muse: The Popular Arts in America p. 375.
74. Ibid, p. 379.
75. Ibid, p. 380.
76. Perrett, Geoffrey *America in the Twenties* p. 151.
78. Goodman and Gatell *America in the Twenties* p. 57.
79. Ibid, p. 61.
80. Ibid, p. 64.
82. Ibid, p. 356.
84. Ibid, p. 181.
86. Goodman and Gatell *America in the Twenties* p. 63.
98. *Only Yesterday* p. 106.
100. *Only Yesterday* p. 107.
103. Ibid, p. 92.
104. Ibid, p. 93.
105. The Lawless Decade p. 117.
106. Only Yesterday p. 121.
108. Perrett, Geoffrey America in the Twenties p. 211.
109. America Learns to Play p. 351.
110. Perrett, Geoffrey America in the Twenties p. 211.
111. America Learns to Play p. 350.
113. America Learns to Play p. 353.
117. America Learns to Play p. 353.
118. Ibid, p. 353.
120. Ibid, p. 216.
121. America Learns to Play p. 354.
124. America Learns to Play p. 359.
125. Ibid, p. 357.
126. Ibid, p. 357.
128. America Learns to Play p. 360.
134. Only Yesterday p. 332.
137. Ibid, p. 353.
139. Only Yesterday p. 271.
140. Ibid, p. 287.
142. Goodman and Gatell America in the Twenties p. 73.
143. Only Yesterday p. 200.
144. Ibid, p. 201.
146. The United States in the 20th Century p. 354.
147. Ibid, p. 354.
148. Perrett, Geoffrey America in the Twenties p. 266.
150. The Unembarassed Muse: The Popular Arts in America p. 221.
151. Ibid, p. 222.
156. Only Yesterday p. 331.
159. Twentieth Century America p. 284.
160. The Lawless Decade p. 115.
161. Twentieth Century America p. 275.
166. The United States in the 20th Century p. 367.
167. The Unembarrassed Muse: The Popular Arts in America p. 171.
169. Ibid, p. 177.
170. Ibid, p. 179.
171. Ibid, p. 179.
175. Ibid, p. 255.
176. Ibid, p. 256.
177. Ibid, p. 256.
178. The Twenties: Fords, Flappers and Fanatics p. 76.
179. Ibid, p. 80.
181. The Twenties: Fords, Flappers and Fanatics p. 81.


