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Von Prof. Dominick J. Cavallo


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Dominick Cavallo

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Von Prof. Dominick J. Cavallo : A Fiction of the Past: The Sixties in American History before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Fiction of the Past: The Sixties in American History:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Must reading for Rockers, Republicans and Theater CriticsVon Ein KundeCome one, come all and see before your very eyes how the 60s lives, once again! This book is for anyone who either missed or misunderstood the origins of discontent that led to the radical 60s in America.This book is not heavy reading. Cavallo masterfully locates the roots

of American counterculture in 1950's child-rearing and popular culture as well as specific historical movements of the late 18th and the 19th century that made this brand of radicalism clearly American. Cavallo begins with an examination of popular child-rearing practices that he terms "the cult of security." The "cult of security" is, in part, a blend of post World War II parental determination to build character in their children based on a love of independence and fierce determination to succeed. This was a mid 20th century secular version of the 19th century Protestant struggle with individual "free will" and the external constraints of God's Kingdom here on earth. But what has this to do with social, cultural and political rebellion in the 1960s? Cavallo points out that in order to rebel against traditional forms of authority (SDS), to reconsider the structure and functions of the family (communes), and to reject mainstream art and music (rock roll and street theater) is not to be accomplished by the faint of heart. For this kind of self-dissolving and self evolving activity, character formation in childhood and early adolescence requires a blend of parental love, a demand for independent thinking and a fierce determination to achieve success. This is the stuff of strong ego formation-the glue that cemented a rebellious spirit to the harsh demands of emotional and physical participation in social unrest. Even that icon of moral childhood socialization, Walt Disney, reinforced this emerging independent spirit through none other than Jimminy Cricket who exhorted all children who were watching to "always let your conscience be your guide." Some cartoon, heh. Ironically, while parents never wavered in their determination to provide updated soldiers for capitalism harnessing their children's independent spirit to hard work ala Bill Gates, what they got instead was sex, drugs and rock roll in the persons of Timothy Leary, Jimmy Hendrix and Jerry Rubin! Trust Cavallo on this one, this was not what mom and pop had in mind. Cavallo's deft touch weaves together a tapestry of popular imagery from Parents Magazine, television's Marlboro Man and non-fiction from the Organization man to The Female Eunuch to disclose the soul of a new American manhood and feminism-- a transition from "McCarthyism" to the underbelly of "Camelot," 60s radicalism. Where other writers serve up moral platitudes and half baked opinions tagging 60s radicalism as naive, bizarre or a communist plot, Cavallo sheds light on how close the rebellion of youth was to mainstream values and cultural antecedents in the late 18th and the 19th century. Cavallo, for example, links rock roll and street theater to mainstream values of hard work and professionalism. This synthesis would have even been tough for G.W. Hegel, but Cavallo succeeds nevertheless. In fascinating chapters that read like a tour guide, Cavallo takes us on a "trip" down a San Francisco street where we encounter the "Diggers," the pied pipers of street theater and street games. Stopping traffic, they hold up a big picture frame right in front of you to provide you with a "new frame of reference." Or walk with Cavallo into one of the Diggers "free" stores in Haight Asbury where, by definition, stealing is impossible. By the time that Abby Hoffman would write, "Steal This Book," the Diggers had already "been there, done that" nearly a decade before. In fact, these Shakespeare of the streets according to Cavallo, were even branded as too weird and excluded by more practical political rebels like the SDS. Did he say "practical"? Cavallo reserves his best insight for the chapter on Rock Work. Unlike their popular image that Rockers are self indulgent, irresponsible, and morally bankrupt, Cavallo lets us in on a little secret through the personal letters of rock stars and through media interviews-Rockers worked hard, took pride in their work as professionals and fought for artistic integrity often at the expense of fame and moolah. Hard work and integrity truly lied center stage in 60s Rock Roll exemplified by rock stars such as Janis Joplin. Joplin masked her middle class determination to be the best female blues vocalist through a regimen of hard work with a boosey-bluesy radical political interpretation of down-home Texas blues. Cavallo demonstrates that it was not only about hard work and professionalism. It was also control about who would control their own music and how to protect it from homogenization by the Robber Barons of the music industry at firms like Capital records. Cavallo examines these struggles through (among others) bios of rockers Neil Young and Bob Dylan--clearly rebels with a cause. But that's not all. Through other bios Cavallo gives us a glimpse of what really went on in the recording studios; continuing to emphasize the brutally hard won independence from musical commercialism through the eyes of Frank Zappa, Gerry Garcia and many other stars. There's more to come from Cavallo, however, who constantly takes time-out from his 60s tour-de-force to remind us of historical context embedding this decade in the political and social movements of the two preceding centuries. Turning to the origins of radical 60s political thought, Cavallo takes us back to the Constitutional radicals of yesteryear, the Anti Federalists, recovering their debate about the meaning of democracy and the evil inherent in the centralization of power in national government and placing SDS thought and practice smack in the middle. The American version of communal living and independent free will like all forms of life began in the water, in this case the waters of Walden Pond embodied in the social experiments of Emerson and Thoreau. Then there was the fashion statement of the 60s "do your own thing" (if you recall, it wasn't always pretty and it didn't always smell so good). Appropriating the dress of the 19th century frontier-a combination of cowboys and Indians-from boots and stove-pipe Jeans to long-hair, headbands and fringed leather jackets, 60s radical chic came more from Tombstone than from the English dandies of Barnaby Street. Once again making sense out of nonsense to further support the origins of the frontier fashion statement, Cavallo cleverly merges history with the 1950s western craze that swept television from Gunsmoke to Bonanza. Even the TV show the Untouchables was a western with Italians replacing the Indians and dressing weird too. If ever there was validation that "clothes makes the man" putting on the outfit of a 19th century gunfighter (without the gun) produced a feeling of rugged individualism and rule by conscience the very spirit of 1960s

radicalism. Finally, through the use of biography of 1960s activists, Cavallo explores the many contradictions that riddled 60s radicalism. For example, contrasting the struggle for male independence from the suffocating grip of a "straight" corporate career with their inability to see and to treat women's struggles for independence from men as equally important. Nowhere is the conflict of machismo and feminism more evident than in the mini-biography of Digger Emmett Grogan who befriended an Indian, left San Francisco and wandered off into the wilderness to commune with nature and to get back to his primitive self. While seeking to be the new man, Grogan consistently mistreated his girlfriend limiting her "new" experience to part-time maid and concubine, ultimately shedding her when she no longer suited his needs. In Grogan's quest for purity of purpose, he frequently overlooked the impact of his own behavior on others as he morphed himself into his new, radical desocialized self. Cavallo introduces us to other ultra weirdoes like Grogan's fellow Digger, Peter Coyote, but let me not spill all the beans. Buy this book, Grogan's big adventure alone is worth the price.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. "The 60s" -- more than an American thing
Von Lawrence M. Kelly
At this juncture, I've only had opportunity to read the publisher's summary and a reader review, wherein the author's concentration on the U.S. data is majored. But, "the sixties" were not a uniquely American phenomenon. Rather, virtually the whole world convulsed in the sixties (see, e.g., South America; Europe) and these countries were free from such influences as Viet Nam and the American style of child-rearing. Thus, the true root (and an informative understanding) of "the sixties" must be sought beyond -- as well as within -- our borders.

Kurzbeschreibung
Few events during that whirlwind of movements, conflicts and upheaval known as "the sixties" took Americans more by surprise, or were more likely to inspire their rage, than the rebellion of those who were young, white, and college educated. Perhaps none have been more maligned or misunderstood since. In *A Fiction of the Past*, Dominick Cavallo pushes past the contemporary fog of myth, cold disdain and warm nostalgia that shrouds the radical youth culture of the '60s. He explores how the furiously chaotic sixties sprang from the comparatively placid forties and fifties. The book digs beyond the post-World War II decades and seeks the historical sources of the youth culture in the distant American past. Cavallo shows how the sixties' most radical ideas and values were deeply etched in the American soul.

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"It is all too rare that any book on the '60s these days makes me really rethink the era, but Cavallo's succeeds brilliantly..." --Maurice Isserman, William R. Kenan Professor of History, Hamilton College

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