

The hippie movement in california essay sample

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Introduction

Formerly a Youth Movement, the Hippie subgroup commenced in the early 1960s, instigating from the United States and disseminating across the world. Derived from the hipster, the word hippie was primarily used to describe beatniks, members of the Beat Generation, who had shifted into San Francisco. These people, in 1950s, had rejected the conventional values, norms, and practices; criticized established institutions; dissented with the nuclear weapons and the Vietnam War; and dress of Western society and instead, tried out with Eastern philosophies, communal living and illegal drugs.

Being popular in Germany, Hippies, by acceding to the countercultural values, carried out their own interests by creating their own communities, listening to mind-blowing psychedelic rock, wearing colorful clothing and long hair, using hallucinogenic drugs and setting off with sexual liberation. They exposed themselves against the social and political convention, preferring, in its place, a liberal philosophy that valued love, harmony, tranquility, personal liberty and a mellow lifestyle. They manipulated different arts and skills, tailored folk music and theatre and included them as a part of their lifestyle and as a means of putting across their feelings, objections and forethoughts about the world and daily life. Many of these Germans who idealized their lifestyle in a restful, pleasant and appealing climate, decided to move to Southern California and settle there for the time to exercise their fantasized way of living.

Timothy Miller, a historian of religion, termed the Hippies as a “ new religious movement.”[1] As these Germans settled in the United States, the U. S. youths adopted these ideas and practices of the new migrants.

The Early Hippies

An American novelist Ken Kesey was considered as one of the most well-known individual in the psychedelic movement. On the other hand, Merry Pranksters were a group of people who were famous for their lengthy road trip across the United States in a colorful school bus named as “ Further”, and who were famed for using LSD, marijuana and amphetamines. The Merry Pranksters grew over Ken Kesey, and mutually lived in California and Oregon. For celebrating Kesey’s novel publication *Sometimes a Great Notion*, together they travelled throughout the United States, enthusing public and taping their trip to later display it in front of the people in a variety of carnivals and shows. Their Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test is very significant in history, a brash adventure indeed, through which they used to offer LSD to interested people in a series of musical occasions and interactive programs known as Acid Tests. Intriguingly advertised, these tests were held at a number of sites in California. Psychedelic music bands would play during these episodes.

It was in 1963 when a conventional all night American Native Peyote ceremony was set up by Chandler A. Laughlin III with an intention to create a family-like atmosphere amongst around fifty people who showed up there. He mixed traditional folk music and the developing psychedelic rock scene in a unique blend, and along with his supporters, created what turned out to be

known as “ The Red Experience.” It was anticipated that this event would pool the customary Native American divine values with a psychedelic experience. As a plus point, this also gave a chance to the previously unidentified musical acts to get acknowledged for example Big Brother and the Holding Company, The Grateful Dead and others who played in The Red Dog Saloon - a bar located in Virginia City - in an atmosphere where the performers and spectators could not be differentiated.

The Red Dog Participants, after returning to San Francisco, initiated a group known as “ The Family Dog.” Following the version of their Red Dog Experiences, in 1965, The Family Dog hosted “ A Tribute to Dr. Strange.” About 500 of the Bay Area’s original ‘ hippies’ attended the event, which got to be known as San Francisco’s first psychedelic rock performance.

Summer of Love (1967)

With around 20, 000 hippies assembling in the Golden Gate Park, in January, the hippie culture prevailed across the United States. It was because of the outdoor Human Be-In that it got so popularized. By March, around 10, 000 hippies gathered together in Manhattan for the Central Park Be-In.

Psychedelic rock music was brought in to an inclusive audience, by the Monetary Pop Festival in mid June, which indicated the foundation of the “ Summer of Love.”[2] The song “ San Francisco” by John Phillips, after Scott McKenzie’s rendition, grew into a big hit in the United States. A large number of young people from all over the world were enthused by the song’s lyrics about ‘ wearing flowers in hair’ whenever visiting San Francisco, and were hence, roused to get there. They won the name ‘ Flower Children,’ for they

followed the song in wearing flowers in their hair, and besides that, distributed flowers to pedestrians. The mass media followed them, highlighting the activities and commercializing the 'hippie' label. However, much criticized for their anti-cultural work, drug favoring, and lenient morality, they still found encouragement for their principles of peace and love by in fact gaining the advantage of being in the limelight of media.

In July, Time magazine featured a cover story entitled, "The Hippies: The Philosophy of a Subculture." The piece of article depicted the parameter of the hippie convention: "Do your own thing, wherever you have to do it and whenever you want. Drop out. Leave society as you have known it. Leave it utterly. Blow the mind of every straight person you can reach. Turn them on, if not to drugs, then to beauty, love, honesty, fun." [3]

Revolution (1968-1969)

The People's Park in Berkeley, California, got a worldwide consideration in 1969. On about a 3 acre piece of land near the University of California, Berkeley, all the buildings were demolished, for the intention to use the land to build playing grounds and a parking lot. It was in April 1969, and the site had become a blot on the landscape due to the long delay. A large number of average Berkeley citizens, shopkeepers, dealers, students, and hippies took the affair under their control, converting the land into a park by planting trees and flowers. As a result, the Governor, in May 1969, ordered the United States National Guard to occupy the city of Berkeley for two weeks. The hippies, under the slogan of 'Let a Thousand Parks Bloom', engaged into civil defiance, by planting flowers in vacant lots all over Berkeley.

In December 1969, the Altamont Free Concert took place in Altamont, California which represented the hippie counterculture. Over 300, 000 people arrived to hear remarkable musicians and bands of the age, among them The Rolling Stones; Jefferson Airplane; Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young and other bands. But a tragic incident of the stabbing and killing of a young teenager, along with other four accidental deaths, produced shocks all over.

After 1970

The events at Altamont had taken aback a number of Americans, together with those who had ardently associated with hippie culture. The ideas and spirit of 1960s that had set off the hippie culture seemed to fade by 1970.[4] Much of the hippie style had been assimilated into the conventional American society by the early 1970s.[5] Originating with the 1967 Monterey Rock Festival and the 1968 Isle of Wight Festival, large rock, astounding concerts became a norm. With the Vietnam War ending, and as the United States Bicentennial brought with it refurbished patriotic and loyal sentiments, the conventional media dropped the hippie counterculture coverage. Punk rock, heavy metal and rave transpired and took the place of psychedelic and Acid rock. Some people argue that the hippies ' sold-out' during the 1980s and became part of the materialist, consumer culture.[6]

Neo-hippies

Hippie culture has actually never gone dead completely. Neo-hippies, some of whom are direct or indirect descendants of the original hippies, favor many of the same ideas of their opposite number from the 1960s. As in the ' original' hippie days, drug use is likewise agreed to. Even, in fact, many neo-

hippies do not really consider drug usage to be necessarily a part of their standard of living. Many of them think that adopting alternative ways for reaching higher and altered state of mind is much better. They follow substitutes, such as dance, yoga, meditation, drumming circles and community singing.

In the United States, hippies and neo-hippies were found in mid 1990s (and can still be found), on college campuses, in communities and at get-togethers and festivals. Some of them express themselves as ' Rainbows' Rainbow Gatherings take place on U. S. National Forest Land, where the Rainbows have been meeting informally since the early 1970s. They carry the motto " Peace, love, harmony, freedom, and community."

Ethos and Characteristics

Hippies pursued to liberate themselves from societal constraints, and instead preferred their own fashion of living, while treasuring a new meaning in life. Their remarkable and rare paradigm of dress and grooming was indeed an extraordinary expression of their freedom from societal norms. Their colorful incredible vehicles and homes often decorated with psychedelic art were also a significant tool that served them an outstanding recognition. In this movement, men and women both wore jeans and maintained long hair.[7] They preferred hitchhiking as a main means of transport as it was thought to be cost-effective, environmentally and a way to become acquainted with new people.

Legacy

The legacy of hippie movement keeps on pervading the culture. The earlier political protests by the people are now regarded as reasonable expressions of free speech. Unmarried couples consider themselves at full liberty to journey and live together, and the society never opposes that. Openness as regards to sexual matters has become a custom. A variety of cultural and religious norms and productive community living procedures have acquired wide acceptance. " In particular the development and popularization of the Internet finds its roots in the anti-authoritarian ethos promoted by hippie culture".[8]

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