

The impact the vietnam war had on music assignment

[History](#)



America was flipped upside down and so was the music. Since the war had begun, John F. Kennedy, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and Robert F. Kennedy had been assassinated, the draft had taken thousands of young men away from their family and friends, the LA race riots had occurred, numerous Anti-war and draft protests killed innocent civilians around the nation, and on top of it all the gruesome war was televised for every American to watch. From the time it was introduced into common American culture until the mid sass rock music was continuously changing, reinventing its purpose and sound.

As the culture and attitude of Americans came enveloped by the darkness of the war, so did the music. The war had affected everybody's life in one way or another and music was drastically affected as well. A significant number of artists who became famous had the same motives and anti-war attitude. This common theme marked the beginning of the new rock era. Not only did music serve as a direct means of anti-war protest but also the ideology of peace and love appealed to the youth and enveloped the culture of the ass. Without the Vietnam War Rock music would not have taken the route it did away from the conformist sound of the ass.

The emotional evolution that rock went through during the Vietnam era created what rock and roll was and what it later became. The sass are commonly known as an era of conformity and complacency in America. World War II had just ended and the nation as a whole was tired, trying to return to normal. It was a time where far out ideas were seen as radical and people were severely punished because of the national fear of communism. Because of this, everybody kept quiet and lived their " happy" American life

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styles in their quaint American suburbs with their “ perfect” American families.

The music of this post WI era reflected this conformist lifestyle. Primarily the genres that dominated the sass were Classic Pop, R, and Rock and Roll/Rockabilly. Classic pop generally was more popular in the early ass, mostly consisting of big band and swing music that emphasized orchestration and a gentle and upbeat tone. Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald are artists that fell into this category. By the mid ass R became popular with the tracks “ Tutu Fruit” and “ Long Tall Sally’ by Little Richard.

This new fun, funky, and frisky sound was a path many artists were beginning to follow t this time. By the end of the decade, Rock and Roll and Rockabilly had surfaced. Rockabilly was a term consisting of the “ rock” from “ rock and roll” and “ hillbilly’s’ referring to country music. It was a sound that was an infusion of country and bluegrass with R. The king himself, Elvis Presley embodies this genre best. The sound of these genres was new and impressive at the time but, in hindsight, had been emotionless and hardly significant in comparison to the proceeding decade.

The cultural and musical change of rock and roll began with the counterculture and the youth of the sass. According to ARC She author of “ Reason and the Religion of the Counter- Culture”, the birth and death of the counterculture of the ass and ass in the United States parallels the dates of America’s involvement of the Vietnam War, beginning around 1964 and ending in 1975. This is no coincidence; the counterculture was made up of the youth of this era. Students and young adults that were against all Of

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society's mainstream norms, values, and ideals formed subcultures within the counterculture.

These subcultures consisted of feminists, homosexuals, environmentalists, and civil-rights activists, for there ere a plethora of different movements going on at the time but primarily anti-war and anti-establishment activists. Those against the government were known as the Hippie counterculture. It was a social revolution that defined the era with its fight for peace, its embrace of eastern philosophy, a motivation for self-expression, anti-establishment ideals, and psychedelic drugs, clothing, colors, and music. Different than the other countercultures preceding it, this generation wanted change and took matters into their own hands.

It was courageous and had never been done before. At this point in story, the nation was divided into " The Hawks" and " The Doves", the fighters and the peacemakers, those who supported the war and those who did not. This was a distinct gap between the counterculture (the youth) and mainstream culture (the older generations): they had different political beliefs, they dressed differently, and they listened to different music. Overtime, in the late ass, the hippie counterculture began to seep into mainstream society, bringing along the rock music they listened to.

The major genres of rock music that emerged during the ass were Psychedelic Rock and Folk Rock. These genres began in affiliation with the counterculture in the early ass and were not considered to be mainstream until the late ass, early ass. The new genres were polar opposites of one another in sound, but the Vietnam War was a common influence for both

genres. Psychedelic rock was music that was often associated with the hallucinogenic drugs of the time, attempting to recreate the feeling of being under the influence of drugs through music.

These psychedelic drugs were often turned to in order to cope with the war. Acid and LSI was legal and often made people value non-conformity and also against the war. Folk rock was the original means of protest music against the war, creating lyrics and a sound that was controversial. The Vietnam War also gave the artists something much meaningful to write about. The war was something significant, something filled with emotions, and something relatable. Before Vietnam, popular art corresponded with a thriving, successful economy.

However, a change had occurred because of the war, art was no longer created out of happiness and prosperity but rather out of the pain and turmoil that was a response to the war. Jean Paul Frederica Richter, a German romantic writer once wrote that, "Music is the moonlight in the gloomy night of life" and in the end it was just that. Rock music was the brilliant, swirling light at the end of the tunnel and songs like "Give Peace a Chance" by John Lennox, reminded Americans that peace and love and happiness were still attainable in a time of suffering.

Regardless, the hope came from a dark place and this had never happened before. Vietnam had reached out and altered everybody's life. It's difficult to not find a song with lyrics or mood that weren't relatable with an emotion that wasn't familiar. Although sometimes the tone was sad and dark, the audience could relate to the anger and chaos that was created while

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listening to this new sound that was influenced by Blues, Jazz and Folk with a hard edge. Overall, the music that exemplified their anti-war beliefs unified the counterculture.

The people of the counterculture were able to turn to music in their time of need to, in a sense, comfort themselves and reassure themselves that they weren't alone, that there were thousands in the same situation. At the peak of America's involvement in Vietnam, rock music began seeping from the hippie counterculture into everyday life and mainstream ultra. Opposition of the war was at it's highest, because more of the youth began hopping on the hippie bandwagon.

Young people realized that this generation of musicians were not afraid to shout from a mountaintop what they believed was right and wrong and spoke for them through their music. The hippie culture, and the music associated with it, shook the foundation of conformity to its core. It was that courage essentially driven by anger that propelled the rapid evolution of rock music and created rock and roll. Musician Bob Dylan was one of the earliest artists who bridged the gap teens folk protest music, rock and roll, and mainstream society.

Dylan was an artist that loved to be controversial, to go against the grain, and keep his audiences on their toes. At the beginning of his career he started out writing and performing protest music. In 1963, Dylan released the song ' The Times They are A-changing" which is a song that became an anthem for the period of transition that America was going through, and represented the inevitable and unstoppable cultural change. The song was

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released just as the nation began disapproving the war. The song spoke of the war directly and scolded how it will soon affect everybody's life, "...

There's a battle outside/ And it is raging' . /little soon shake your windows/And rattle your walls... " The song also addresses the older generation's old conformist attitudes in the fourth verse " Come mothers and fathers/Throughout the land/And don't criticize/What you can't understand/Your sons and your daughters/Are beyond your command/Your old road is/Rapidly again'/Please get out of the new one/elf you can't lend your hand/For the times they are a-changing' . " Bob Dylan is a prime example of an artist that emerged from the counterculture's deals and became popular from the get go.

Bob Dylan didn't jump on the bandwagon of psychedelic rock but he did switch from folk to rock and roll. This controversial change was attributed to the war. Rock and roll was the language of the time, used to express yourself, and everybody was speaking it. After 1965, Bob Dylan made the switch from being a folk singer to a rock and roller, publicly, at the Newport folk festival. Dylan was no longer writing and performing protest songs in 1966 but rather rock and roll, which was protest in and of it's self.

Rock was seen as the sound of complete rebellion ND because Bob Dylan was a respected and popular artist, it was a change that only would have been an issue during the time of the war. Dylan claimed however that this switch to the electric sound was actually the height of his protest years, " Very, very protests. And, uh, one of the proprieties of all things ever protested against in my protest years. " (New York Times). Dylan folk

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following merged with his new rock and roll fans, making him even more popular.

Bob Dylan controversial changes joined together the sound of controversy and anti-establishment and war with everyday society. A majority of artists were hopping on this Rock music bandwagon around 1967, after Bob Dylan controversial switch over. To the mainstream society Rock music as a whole began to be seen as anthem to anti-war, anti-establishment, rebellion and chaos, because of the media attention it was attracting. The first major event to significantly attracted media attention and publicize the counterculture and their music was The Great Human Be-in on January 14th, 1967. 3, 000 hippies were expected but 30, 000 hippies showed up and gathered in San Franciscans Golden Gate Park to celebrate the hippie culture," ascribes the San Francisco Gate. It also was the first event in a movement of people, music, and ideas all together: The ethos of this new movement was a fundamental questioning of authority, a focus on individuality, decentralization, ecological awareness, and consciousness expansion through cultural openness and the use of psychedelic drugs.

These ideas transfixed mainstream culture, and the phenomenon of the "hippie" burst full force into the public consciousness, transforming a generation. (newsworthiness. Org) The Rock bands that preformed at the event consisted of, Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother and The Holding Company, and The Grateful Dead. This was also the movement where American psychologist Timothy Leary coined his famous phrase, " Tune in, Turn on, Drop out," which referred to his belief that people should not conform but

instead should show their resistance by dropping out of school, listening to music, and doing acid.

These ideals disgusted the older generations, for they were stuck in their conformist ways of the ass, but the peace and love and music was appealing to the youth. With the media attention the hippie movement gained speed. The generation AP that was evident when looking at the success of these bands and participants at gatherings really shows how the Vietnam War influenced the youth culture. Aside from the culture that spun off a general anti-war sentiment, gatherings such as the Human Be-Len appealed to the youth and created a draft that physically separated the old and the young.

The war created a need to separate the music that was controversial and the music that was politically uninvolved. After the controversial music began to erupt into the mainstream limelight, other previously popular artists began writing ones that were highly influenced by the Vietnam War. However, the merge between mainstream and rock music was slightly obstructed by the division of the radio at the time. Corporate powers often banned what they considered to be controversial or provocative music on the AM radio stations, even if the artist's music had been played On the station prior.

The FM radio became the place where the banned songs were played and were referred to as " underground" or " alternative. " This separation of audiences represented the physical generation gap. Artists such as P. R Sloan wrote the song " Eve of Destruction" in 1965, which was banned from the AM radio the same year. The song was indeed provocative and was essentially major catalyst for change. The line "... You're old enough to kill,

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but not for voting'... " Pushed the nation towards the addition of the 19th Amendment, changing the voting age from 21 to 18. In an interview on p.

From Sloan's official website, he described why corporate found it necessary to ban this song from the radio and the conservative society's reaction to the sound: The media frenzy over the song tore me up and seemed to tear the country apart. As an enemy of the people to some and a hero to others... The media headlined the song as everything that is wrong with the youth culture... Sloan told the press it was a love song. A love song to and for humanity, that's all... At the time, the artists noted the distinct split in beliefs and morals that the nation had because of the war.

Despite those who saw Sloan as their " enemy", " Eve of Destruction" was one of the anti-war songs to hit Billboard's number one spot. Another example of a successful anti-establishment song would be " Ohio" by Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young. This song was also banned from the AM stations and is arguably the most controversial song ever written. The song consists of the repetition of the two verses. The first is, " Tin soldiers and Nixon coming " We're finally on our own. /This summer hear the drumming,/Four dead in Ohio. " The lyrics of the song verbalize the artist's and the national anger and horror.

According to The Biography of Neil Young, Crosby once stated that Young keeping Nixon's name in the lyrics was " the bravest thing ever heard and was the major reason why the song was so controversial. The lyric writer, Neil Young, blatantly challenged Nixon's administration within the first line of

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the song and blamed the president for the four deaths of the Kent state shooting in 1970. The second verse however served as a different purpose, to make the situation far more personal, “ Cotta get down to it/Soldiers are cutting us down/Should have been done long ago. What if you knew her/And found her dead on the ground/How can you run when you know? ” There was a photo printed on the cover of “ Life” magazine of the young girl that was deceased and to many, the mental image could not be shaken (The Rock and Roll war). The second verse packed an emotional punch and the simplicity in this song is an attribute that makes it very powerful. The national response to the shooting furthered the nations disgust with the Vietnam War and continued to question America’s involvement with it.

These two highly popular songs are just a few examples of the political impact the war had on the content of music, personally and politically. One of the most memorable anti-war and peace movements is also the greatest music festival in history known as Woodstock. As seen on the original poster to the right Woodstock was an event that was three days long, August 5th-17th, 1969, and was often referred to as ‘ Three Days of Peace and Love??’ in contrast to the turmoil that the Vietnam War had caused (The Woodstock Story).

The event occurred right after the historic “ Summer of Love” also known as the “ Age of Aquarius” and at the point where the counterculture movement was at full speed. Only about 1 50, 000 people were expected to attend the event but the number of attendees that traveled from around the world to upstate New York to be apart of the festivities and experience the music

grew to about 500, 000. The theme of the event was anti-war and peace ND just about every type of artist came out to play. Organizers of the event made it a point to notify people that when they purchase their ticket, they're contributing against the war (the Woodstock story). Woodstock signaled the merger and ambivalence of the counterculture and protest. " Woodstock was a celebration of freedom and a movement against the war. Protest music was played, protest poems were recited, draft papers were destroyed in ceremony, and political non-violent activists spoke (History They Didn't Teach You in School). The performances including music icons such as Jim Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Joan Bake, The Grateful Dead, Joe Cocker, Santa, and The Who were epic and popularized entire psychedelic rock music vein.

The eclectic genres of artists and the half a million people that came together sent the message to the world that people in mass amounts were able to be peacefully gather to celebrate peace and music and the violence was unnecessary. The fact that individuals were able to organize an event of that magnitude for a common interest and belief is something that has not yet happened again and exemplified the great power that the music had on this generation. Not only did the war have an effect on the music but the music also had an effect on the war.

The Vietnam War is sometimes referred to as " The Rock and Roll War" because it was the first war where the soldiers listened to the anti-war protest songs while in combat. Keep in mind 90% of the soldiers were under the age of 23 and the average age was 19. The radio stations that was broadcast for the soldiers upon request was the rock music that everybody

was listening to back at home. Phrases began to be used in the context of war for example, "rock and roll" was used instead of "lock and dad." The youth of the 1960s were known for their rebellion known as rock and roll.

The artistic innovations and restricting culture of the 1950s was merely the spark that ignited the flame of rock and roll. Beginning with the 1950s, Rock music took a drastic turn. The unique sound of the 1950s was just a prelude to the era of Rock and Roll. The lyrics and meanings were conservative because nobody had yet built up the courage to make the drastic jumps necessary to change the course of music. The conformist way of living ended up creating a sub-culture of young non-conformists who grew to become the counter culture that began in the 1960s.

The transition between cultures took place because of the Vietnam War and the music was changing along with it. The war had created a large social gap between the older generations raised in the conformist culture of the 1950s and the counterculture consisting of the primarily the youth of the 1960s. The music that emerged with the counterculture was a large amount of protest rock music that was against the war and seen as controversial from the mainstream society at the time.

Even though the mainstream culture kept attempting to hold back the growth of the counterculture and the spread of their music by controlling the airwaves, early artists such as Bob Dylan and P. F. Sloan were successful making "Billboards top 100" in the mid 1960s. As the transition progressed, Rock music began to become more popular as the hippie culture began to pick up speed. By the 1960s the Vietnam War was hardly supported, the

counterculture became mainstream, and Rock and Roll was the genre that dominated America. It's evident that the Vietnam War forced a shift in culture and music.