

Defining the humanities

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The purpose of this paper is to differentiate the humanities from other modes of human inquiry and expression. I will define the humanities of a cultural event of music and how music was an expression of what I know about the humanities, art, style, genius, and culture from the 60s. I will also discuss how the music of the 60s compares with other forms I know about from the same period.

One of the definitions of humanities, according to the American Heritage Dictionary, is " Those branches of knowledge, such as philosophy, literature, and art, that are concerned with human thought and culture; the liberal arts. " Culture is a big part of humanities. Culture, as defined by the American Heritage Dictionary, is the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and other products of human work and thought. These patterns, traits, and products considered as the expression of a particular period, class, community, or population (American heritage dictionary, 2000).

Music is an artistic form of sound communication via musical instruments and voices that produce sounds and tones. Music is as old as mankind and cultures past and present have music. The " oldest known song" dates back 4, 000 years ago and was written in ancient cuneiform. Cuneiform is a character or characters formed by the arrangement of small wedge-shaped elements and used in ancient Sumerian, Akkadian, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian writing (American heritage dictionary, 2000).

The certainty of how or when the first musical instrument was invented, however, most historians point to early flutes made from animal bones that are at least 37, 000 years old (Bellis, 2010). The music of the '60s in America

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is the humanities or culture of the American people of that era. Many changes going on in the 60s including revolutionary changes, extraordinary levels of sexual freedom among youths, and revolting teenagers like no one has ever seen before. Music has consistently been influenced by the trends of its time; reflecting the politics, economics, and lifestyles that exist.

The Baby Boomer generation lived during a time when the war had a powerful impact on everyone's life. Drugs became, perhaps, one of the most influential variables apparent in the music of the 60s. In the early 1960s, a band named the Byrd's and guys like Dylan changed the way many people looked at music. These bands started an underground wave that flowed throughout the 60s, this became known as the " Psychedelic Era. " This era introduced drugs to be an important aspect involved in the creation of the music and was used by the listeners to enhance their experience.

Bands such as the Byrd's and Grateful Dead started experimenting with such drugs as LSD, marijuana, and acid. They believed that drugs could help them create music that would blow the music of the fifties away, and it did (" The music of the sixties--the psychedelic era", 1998). The music of the 60s came in many styles. Some of the genres of the era are: Soft rock, (also referred to as mellow rock, light rock, or easy rock) is a style of music that uses the techniques of rock and roll (often combined with elements from folk-rock and singer-songwriter pop) to compose a softer, more toned-down sound for listening.

Soft rock songs generally tend to focus on themes like love, everyday life, and relationships (" Soft rock", 2010). Hard rock - modify rock and roll (blues, country, and gospel), adding to the standard genre harder sounds, heavier

guitar riffs (A short rhythmic phrase), bombastic (long-winded) drumming, and louder vocals (" Hard rock", 2010). Country rock - formed from the fusion of rock with the country (" Country rock", 2010). Folk-rock - combining elements of folk music and rock music (" Folk rock", 2010).

Punk rock - They created fast, hard-edged music, typically with short songs, stripped-down instrumentation, and often political, anti-establishment lyrics (" Punk rock", 2010). Shock rock - is a wide umbrella term for artists who combine rock music with elements of theatrical shock value in live performances (" Shock rock", 2010). Rhythm and Blues (R&B), Soul, Funk Influenced by R&B (" Rhythm and blues", 2010). Many artists' musical roots come from the gospel. For example, Elvis Presley started out singing gospel when he was only a few years old later moving onto Rock and Roll (Nite, 1974, p. 95). The art in America of the 60s was influenced by the desire to move into the modern age or future that the space age seemed to forecast. As with the music of the 60s, drugs had an influence on some of the art of the 60s. This art came to be known as psychedelic art (ex. Brummbaer). Major works by Alexander Calder (mobiles and sculpture) or Helen Frankenthaler (non-representational art) showed a desire to escape from details to interpret. Artists wanted to inspire the viewer to leap into the unknown and experience art in their own way.

A new artist who appeared was Andy Warhol, a leading name in pop art. Other forms evolving during this time were assemblage art, op art (or optical art) (ex. Vasarely), or kinetic abstraction (ex. Marcel Duchamp), environmental art (ex. Robert Smithson), and pop art, (ex. David Hockney) (Goodwin, 2009). In conclusion, humanities or cultures have been around

since the beginning of mankind. Cultures can be estranged in their beliefs hence the creation of new cultures. Music, dance, theater, art, literature, or other cultures can change over time through many influential channels.

For example, the way the war and drugs influence the cultures of the 60s with the songs of war protests and psychedelic art. When changes come about the changes will usually have an effect on the music, dance, theater, art, literature, or other cultures of the era. The one thing mankind can count on through the years, decades, centuries, and millennium changes.

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