

The hippie counterculture assignment

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The Hippie Counterculture The Hippie Movement changed the politics and the culture in America in the sixties. When the nineteen fifties turned into the nineteen sixties, not much had changed, people were still extremely patriotic, the society of America seemed to work together, and the youth of America did not have much to worry about, except for how fast their car went or what kind of outfit they should wear to the Prom. After 1963, things started to slowly change in how America viewed its politics, culture, and social beliefs, and the group that was in charge of this change seemed to be the youth of America.

The Civil Rights Movement, President Kennedy's death, new music, the birth control pill, the growing illegal drug market, and the Vietnam War seemed to blend together to form a new counterculture in America, the hippie. Unlike the society before this movement, the hippie did not try to change America through violence, the hippie tried to change things through peace and love. The Hippie Movement was a moment during the mid sixties through the early 1970s where sex, drugs and Rock-n-Roll, was at the forefront of mainstream society.

No one really knows the true definition of a Hippie, but a common definition describes the hippie as one who does not conform to social standards, advocating a liberal attitude and lifestyle. Phoebe Thompson wrote, " Being a hippie is a choice of philosophy. Hippies are generally antithetical to structured hierarchies, such as church, government, and social castes. The ultimate goal of the hippie movement is peace, attainable only through love and toleration of the earth and each other. Finally, a hippie needs freedom,

both physical freedom to experience life and mental freeness to remain open-minded" (Thompson 12-13).

Many questions are asked when trying to figure out how this movement reached so many of America's youth, and what qualities defined a hippie as a hippie? The nineteen fifties was a decade of prosperous times in America, but the average lifestyle of an American seemed extremely dull. The average American conformed to social norms, most Americans in the nineteen fifties dressed alike, talked the same way, and seemed to have the same types of personality. Music is what started to change the conformist lifestyle in America.

Teenagers started to rebel against their families by listening to Rock-n-Roll, and watching Elvis Presley's sexy dance moves. The music of Elvis and other rock bands caused the rebellion; all the teens needed was a cause" (Manning 32-34). The Rock-n-Roll movement in the nineteen fifties planted the seeds of the Hippie Movement, but Kennedy's assassination, and the Vietnam War really is what sparked this social change in America. President Kennedy saw the Vietnam situation as America's fight to stop the spread of communism.

Kennedy, who was young and well liked by the American people, did not really see much protest from the American people. He wanted equality in America, and supported open-mindedness in his country; at his assassination in 1963 only 5,000 troops were in Vietnam. His successor, Lyndon B. Johnson greatly increased the number of troops that went to Vietnam, reaching 500,000 in 1966. Television allowed the American public to see

what these soldiers were facing and that this was a senseless war. Too many men were coming home in American flag draped coffins, causing many Americans to rebel and move to the new hippie counterculture.

Cute hippie movement germinated in San Francisco, with the Vietnam War at its core. The movement eventually spread to the East Coast as well, centralized in New York's East Village in addition to the Haight-Suburb district of San Francisco and Sunset Strip of Los Angeles" (Buckhorn 858).

Many hippies were angry over the conformist lifestyle that Americans were living in, and wanted to live how they wanted to live not how their employer or television wanted them to live. Hippies also took a political stance against the Vietnam War. The Vietnam War conflicted directly with the hippie belief in peace and love, so the counterculture protested the war throughout the nation. The flower children held love-ins to celebrate their rights, spoke out publicly, formed protest groups with the slogan: Hell no, we onto go! , burned flags, and tore up draft slips" (Buckhorn 858). Many hippies tried to avoid the draft; they did not believe that they should be forced to fight in a war that they did not believe in. Many said that they were gay, or claimed that they were insane just to stay away from Vietnam.

Even though many members of the hippie's families were being drafted they continued to protest, and many of these protests were at America's colleges. " Protests began in Columbia University and Berkeley University, California. A demonstration against Nixon's decision to invade Cambodia led to violence at Kent State University; the National Guard killed four students. Finally, the University of Virginia, founded by America's forefather of freedom Thomas

Jefferson, was raided by two hundred baton-waving policemen who arrested sixty-eight students” (Thompson 66-8).

The greatest voice of the Hippie Movement was their music. Rock and roll was their inspiration. “ Led by Bob Dylan, the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, and the Battles, rock and folk music overtook the airwaves”(Manning 102). At the forefront of the musical change was Bob Dylan. “ In a civil rights march in 1 963, he sang the following years: How many years can some people exist before their allowed to be free? The answer, my friend, is blowing’ in the wind The answer is blowing’ in the wind” (Magnifying).

Folk music was not just music, it tried to instill change on the American public, and convey the message that not everything is perfect in their society. “ Existing in harmony with folk music was rock, which adopted a style known as psychedelic, or mind expansion. Rock’s lyrics were less important, with the overall sound dominating as an expression of the soul. And with many band members high on marijuana or LSI, hardcore acid rock came a means of escaping the world-for both the band and the audience” (Managing 02-103).

The most well known combination Of Folk and Rock Music was at the Woodstock concert in the summer of 1969. “ Located in New York State, Woodstock the concert was a three-day long event in which 400, 000 people got high, had sex, and listened to some very beautiful and psychedelic music. The roster included some of the most famous rock bands on earth, as well talented amateurs looking for a start. An attendee described it as: Three

days of love, peace, and rock! ” (Thompson 89). This concert stood for what the hippie’s were all about: sex, drugs, and Rock-n-Roll.

It also jumpstarted the musical changed of more drugged-up song lyrics of the nineteen seventies. Illegal drugs and hallucinogens were an important aspect of the hippie lifestyle. Marijuana and LSI seemed like it had only taken one night to sweep across America and into the hippie culture. It seemed like every cool or “ groovy” teenager was experimenting With these drugs, and implementing them into their everyday routine. “ The Doors of Perception to defend their drug use. Eventually more toxic drugs such as cocaine, heroin, barbiturates, ND amphetamines followed, used for recreation and often leading to fatal consequences.

Drugs became incorporated into the music industry as well; most musical artists used narcotics, often writing and performing songs while high” (Harding 29, 31). Hippies rebelled against their society’s conformist lifestyle, and not only did their drug use and music rebel against the societal norms, but so did their fashion and how they lived. Hippies tried to live away from the conformists in communes, and respected both human and animal rights. Most hippies became vegetarians in a protest against animal cruelty. The hippies lived very modestly, and this did not only apply to where they lived but also how they dressed. Hippies in the sixties did not consider fashion important enough to spend much time on, and on the contrary tried to look bad according to society’s standards. Women dressed like peasants and wore psychedelic colors; makeup and perfume were almost sinful, and clothing was loose, comfortable, and unique” (Michaels 328). The hippies wore bright, psychedelic patterns on their clothes that reflected their

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drugged-up lifestyle and music. “ Both men and women grew long, unkempt hair and the men often grew beards as well.

To outsiders, the hippies seemed dirty, drugged, and disrespectful to their elders; it was exactly what they wanted” (Michaels 329). Hippies believed in their slogan: Peace, Love, and Prosperity. Therefore they supported equal rights for every human being. Many women joined the hippie movement because they wanted to be free and have the same rights as the men in their society. Many women protested their unfair treatment by not shaving their underarm and leg hair. Also, with the new invention of the birth control pill in 1963, women started to explore their sexual freedom.

No longer did they wait till marriage to have sex, they experimented in pre-marital sex and with several partners. “ Dating virtually vanished; hippies had sex first and got to know each other afterwards. With increased sexual freedom and the lack of widespread sexually transmitted diseases, promiscuous sex flourished during the 1960s” (Thompson 44). Another group of people who tried to gain equal rights in America was African Americans. The Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s saw many protests for equal rights, and the end of discrimination for African Americans. Martin Luther King Jr. And Malcolm X eloquently led the black protests and most hippies enthusiastically participating in peaceful demonstrations for black civil rights” (Buckhorn 854-7). The Hippie Movement stood up for this social change, and stood for the equal rights for all people in America. As equal rights started to be achieved and the Vietnam War was coming to an end, so did the Hippie Movement. This social movement did not last forever. Like a fashion trend, the Hippie Movement seemed to die out just as fast as it had started. The <https://assignbuster.com/the-hippie-counterculture-assignment/>

Vietnam War, the main force driving the social revolution, was concluding an anti-war march on Washington and San Francisco in 1971, accumulating over one million participants collectively, and finally persuaded the government to end the bloodshed. A protest sign read: 'The Majority is Not Silent The Government is Deaf' (Manning, 177-9). The hippies were starting to get older as well, and they started to have families of their own and saw that the drug induced lifestyle that they were living was no longer proper for raising a family.

Just like grew out of their lifestyle, the music of the hippies grew away from its original meaning. Too many of the musicians were so doped out that their music no longer stood for anything. The Vietnam War was over, and their songs had nothing to protest, and people started to realize that the drug induced lifestyle that was being spoken in songs had destroyed many lives. The Hippie Movement had a great ten year run of freedom and fun, but fell short on what they truly meant to accomplish; peace and prosperity throughout the entire world. The Hippie Revolution lasted ten years with participation around the world, from the USSR to Great Britain. Yet they accomplished so little. 'The teens were tired of waiting' (Thompson 99-107). Just like Americans today, we grew impatient. People started to grow up, and ironically began to once again conform to the easiness industry that was in front of them. The hippie counterculture was a fun time for everyone who experienced it, but they now had families to support and had to survive in the business world.

The hippies tried to create a foundation of love and peace around the world, but essentially failed. They did contribute to black civil rights, the end of the

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Vietnam War, women's and homosexual rights in America. Even though the Hippie Movement is over, it is still remembered through its music and stories that were passed down from parents to their children. A little piece of the Hippie Era still survives inside the spirit of America today, and will continue to live as long as the music is still played and people have a hope for peace and love throughout the world.