

Counterculture

A glance at the beginnings of the social revolution

by Ryan Bogart

The term "counterculture" developed in the 1960's with the introduction of the new waves of popularity among American youths. These included the hippies, beatniks, and other social revolts of the time period. Although the sixties defined the movement from popular culture, it started much earlier.

In the 1950's, "counterculture" was unheard of. Although the "rebels" slicked back their hair, wore leather jackets, and smoked a cigarettes, the 1950s essentially are defined by conformity to social standard. Anyone who stayed from the "norm" were regarded as social outcasts of the time, and the adult figures of this decade saw them as trouble makers and problems to society.

A typical "sit down talk" with dad after school about what you learned during the day, followed by tea with mother who had been cooking and cleaning all day, are stereotypes constituting the average day in the 50's. Eventually, kids grew up and went to college, where they were taught about things they hadn't been exposed to in high school and at home.

In college, they had more freedom than their parents had experienced, thus more time to ask questions. Coffee houses became a popular hang out because these students could be exposed to different types of people that they were not accustomed to dealing with before.

With these different people came the emerging popularity of music. Music tended to separate the old from the young lively college student. It gave youths a chance to express themselves, something in which they had not been able to do before.

Drugs also became widely used and a major factor in separating the generations. Marijuana allowed people express themselves in ways they did not see possible.

LSD, founded by Harvard professor Timothy Leary was legal and widespread up until the late sixties. Leary travelled around the country to colleges and universities teaching LSD as a path to spiritual enlightenment. The San Francisco scene at Haight-Ashbury was a cult community built on the use of LSD.

The "counterculture" wore their hair long and didn't care about personal grooming in most cases. Looks were based on nature, not on social standards as defined by the authority figures.

To tear down the conventions that were built up in the fifties, youth attitudes reflected dancing, drugs, music and free sex.

The youth felt that they had been cheated from living the good life in the 50's and were sick of "being lied to". They wanted America to see that they were in control of their own lives by living by the motto of "whatever it takes to be happy, I'll do it."

The Beatles were introduced to society as clean cut boys with happy go lucky lyrics. When they were introduced to LSD and marijuana in 1966 by Bob Dylan, they discovered other things, especially music styles. They turned into a more complicated style of writing that still captured American society even though they were a direct result of the "counterculture".

The older generation opposed their styles, music, and ideals. The reason for this is because they were never brought up on the new ideals and indulged in the conservative

traditions of society.

The "counterculture" of contemporary society has major differences than in the sixties. Up until August, "hippies" were still around traveling with the Grateful Dead as a lifestyle. Jerry Garcia died in August which ended an era of togetherness. The Grateful Dead's music brought people together from all walks of life.

There does not seem to be a cohesiveness in the "counterculture" of today. There are so many different forms of the movement today, but there is no common goal as there was in the sixties.

Drugs are as widespread and as commonly used today. Some music styles have changed and others stayed the same.

Youths still love their music. It can be compared to a religion because it is something that is totally free and something that no one can take away.

The lack of unity in youth groups leads to a better control from authorities. With youth divided, they cannot "stand" for their rights. Apathy has devoured a strong political and social force. People seem to worry more about throwing a piece of metal through their eyebrow than the government cutting back student loans. No one has the guts to come together to work for a common goal.

If the time when another social revolution takes place and I'm too old to join their movement, I will still support it. I hope that everyone will remember the feeling they had when they were young and support them too, because freedom needs all the help it can get.

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Amy and Cathy

The weekly advice columnists answer this week's questions with wit and wisdom

Dear Amy and Cathy,

The other day, I was unfortunate to find myself. Now what am I supposed to do?

No Longer Missing

Dear No Longer Missing,

Congratulations!!! Now you can help find us. (Hint: Just follow the dangling particples.)

Amy and Cathy

Dear Amy and Cathy,

Earlier in the week, I was engaged in deep conversation with two of my female friends. To my dismay, I suddenly found myself distanced from this conversation when it turned to the topic of color identification. Being male, and subsequently deficient in this area, I was amazed at their authoritative use of terms such as seafoam, aqua, turquoise, and blue-green. I just sat there wondering, "What ever happened to plain old green?" Was I absent the day they

taught colors in high school? Or am I just stupid?

Color Blind

Dear Color Blind,

Of course, you're stupid. You're male. End of story. Just kidding. Actually, it would appear that we have found yet another case of ROY G. BIV gone crazy. Those darn science people. You give 'em an inch and they just walk all over you. (Incidentally, the bruises they leave are puce.)

What we need to do now is give credit to those evil creators of crayons--they are the true initiators of your strife. Crayola is the enabler of the enablers. Without them, your "plain old green" would rule the world. The paint manufacturers and sweater companies would all go bankrupt, and the world, as we know it, would die.

As for why your female friends have a grasp of this knowledge and you do not...Let's just say now you know why we go into public restrooms in pairs. (That's where they keep the color charts!)

Amy and Cathy