A REALITY TRIP ON THE FREAKS:
A HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE COUNTERCULTURE OF THE 1960S

by

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A Thesis/Project
Presented to
The Faculty of Humboldt State University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Sciences
Teaching American History

May, 2006
ABSTRACT

By the 1960s, parts of mainstream American culture had become so extreme and homogenous that a counterculture of completely opposite values and norms emerged. Although its mantra to ‘tune in, turn on and drop out’ was a call to retreat from the American dream, the counterculture nevertheless had a dramatic and lasting impact on the mainstream culture it had rejected.

The counterculture was overwhelmingly a youth movement, and its members drifted out of America’s most studied generation, the baby boomers. The great size of the baby boomer generation insured that, whatever course it took, the rest of America would be forced to take notice. The first boomers began to leave the nest in the early 60s, and for the majority of the white members of this generation, weaned on television and raised in a suburban cocoon, the American dream had been realized and they were eager to keep it going.

Not everyone was allowed to take part in the dream however. America denied democracy and the materialistic pursuit of happiness to many, most notably African Americans. While still under the repressive chill of the Cold War, the Civil Rights movement burst into the living rooms of white America and made it quite clear that like other marginalized groups, African Americans were not welcome to pursue the dream. The boomers who took this injustice to heart and joined the Civil Rights movement were among the first of their generation to discover that the people in authority they were raised to trust were not always so deserving. Increasing acts of defiance emerged among
the baby boomers when a bloody and difficult to understand war was being waged in Vietnam. Soon thousands of boomers emerged as an angry and demanding force loosely coined the New Left. It was from this group of boomers that a multitude of activist-citizens rose up and to this day are working within the system to make the American Dream a reality for everyone.

Yet for a final group of baby boomers the problem was not that the system was broken and need of repair, it was that the system was altogether wrong. To them the American dream was a nightmare. Taking inspiration from the sensibilities of the Beats, these boomers decided the only real route to change was to drop out, to completely abandon the society at large in order to make room for a new one. It is this final group that has come to be known as the counterculture.

Like many cultural forces in American history, the counterculture is largely stereotyped into a set of clichés. On the surface the hippy lifestyle of communal living, mind-altering drug use, open sexuality and the constant drone of rock-and-roll seemed to be no more than the perennial adolescent defiance of authority experienced by every generation. It is true that, as a movement, the counterculture burned itself out in less than a decade. On the other hand, with the perspective provided by time, it is hard to deny that the counterculture was more than just a passing phase. When looked at more closely, the counterculture becomes far more complex and varied than films like *Forest Gump* have portrayed it. It was a movement of changing values and norms that connect to almost every part of contemporary American life and to some extent the world.
The historical literature on the counterculture is immense. Almost every aspect of the movement has been studied, and to a large degree there is much consensus among the writers about how it evolved. However, there is quite a bit of controversy on what effects, positive and negative, the movement had on mainstream America. What emerges from the literature on the counterculture are not only varied interpretations of our cultural past, but much debate as to where we are today and where we will be tomorrow because of the changes brought about in the 1960s. Also, until recently, there has been a general consensus that the counterculture somehow failed, and disappeared as just another passing fad. This idea is being challenged because many of the oppositional movements of today claim to be direct evolutionary descendants of the counterculture of the 1960s and pay specific tribute to its contributions.

Very little of this controversy is included in modern secondary education history textbooks. In fact, controversy is lacking in almost all subjects in today’s classroom. Unfortunately it is controversy that is often the greatest hook teachers have to engage students. It is my hope that this historiography and the accompanying lesson plans will help other teachers lure their students into examining not only the events that make up the counterculture of the 1960s, but the controversial issues that surround it and are with us today.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my advisor Rod Seivers for his support, my professors Gayle Olsen-Raymer and Deloris McBroome for their inspiration, and my partner in life Su Karl for making me go on walks with her whenever I began screaming at my computer. To all the baby boomers who instinctively felt in their hearts that there was something beautiful and essential being eaten up by society, and demanded we consider saving it before it was too late, I give you my deepest gratitude.
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The sudden and dramatic rebellion against mainstream society by white, middleclass youth in the 1960s is known as “the counterculture” in much the same way as the United States war against the rebellious southern states in the 1860s is known as “the Civil War”. The title makes the insinuation that there has only been one counterculture to speak of. However, countercultures have been around as long as there have been cultures to counter. There are a large number of sociological examinations that focus on this phenomenon, with all of them paying respect to the counterculture of the 1960s. J. Milton Yinger, in his book *Countercultures*, makes the observation, “Every normative system contains the seeds of its own contradiction.”

Theodore Roszak, author of the 1969 book, *The Making of a Counterculture*, concurs. “As often happens, one cultural exaggeration calls forth another, which can be its opposite, but equivalent.”

According to Yinger, a counterculture is “a set of norms and values of a group that sharply contradict the dominant norms and values of the society of which that group is a part.” Within a society, these groups tend to oppose authorities and systems that legitimize the dominant norms and values. Sometimes the opposition is defiant, and simply refuses to participate within the system, while other times the opposition is confrontational and demands change. Either way, a counterculture can grow to the point that a culture may be forced into assimilating some of the counterculture’s values and norms. If a counterculture grows large enough it can even find itself transformed into the
dominate culture. Furthermore, like all processes of change, the transformation isn’t always an easy one. Cultures in change often experience crisis. As Yinger goes on to say, “From one point of view, then, countercultures can be seen as calls for help in stressful times, in periods when the cultural support systems, the myths and symbols, are operating inadequately, when faith in them is gone and seems unlikely to be regained.”

It was within such stressful times that the counterculture of the 1960s emerged. Charles Reich, in his 1970 book *The Greening of America*, viewed the counterculture as a positive response to this crisis. “It promises a higher reason, a more human community, and a new and liberated individual. Its ultimate creation will be a new and enduring wholeness and beauty – a renewed relationship of man to himself, to other men, to society, to nature, and to the land.” Roszak was not only optimistic about the counterculture but he saw it as society’s only hope, as he states, “the alienated young are giving shape to something that looks like the saving vision our endangered civilization requires.” And later, “If the resistance of the counterculture fails, I think there will be nothing in store for us but what anti-utopians like Huxley and Orwell have forecast.”

This hopeful outlook was common among cultural historians of the time. Roszak and Reich are referenced by a majority of subsequent histories of the counterculture. They were both commenters and ideological leaders of the movement while it was still going on. Yet some contemporary writers saw the counterculture as a destructive force to society, and many others would agree in the decades to come. Robert Nisbet looked back on the 60s with this dismal overview,
I think it would be difficult to find a single decade in the history of Western culture when so much barbarism – so much calculate onslaught against culture and convention in any form, and so much degradation of culture and the individual – passed into print, into music, into art, and onto the American stage as the decade of the Nineteen Sixties.\footnote{7}

Although most reviews of the counterculture find it difficult to remain neutral almost every one of them is in consensus that the counterculture had a profound and lasting effect on American life, for better or worse.

*My Generation: Defining the Counterculture*

By the time they were in their teens, a large number of the baby boomers were primed and ready to latch on to a movement of defiance. Roszak termed this phenomenon the adolescentization of dissent. He believed the youth dominated the counterculture because the adult generation in the 1960s was pathologically passive to the troubles of the times. This older generation had experienced a harsh childhood during the Great Depression of the 1930s, lost its innocence during World War II in the 1940s and had become politically numb during the McCarthy era of the 1950s.\footnote{8} Such generational apathy might be difficult to understand coming from, as journalist Tom Brokaw dubbed them, “the greatest generation”\footnote{9}. However, considering all the hardships they had already overcome, it is little wonder that many of this generation may have succumbed to reaping the material benefits of American culture with little interest in criticizing its ill effects.

It is from the surrounding vacuum of adult participation that the youth movement burst forth. Roszak notes adult apathy of the 1960s was not only an American
phenomenon. “…it is headline news that generational antagonism has achieved
international dimensions. Throughout the west it is the young who find themselves cast
as the only effective radical opposition within their societies.”

Os Guinness, in his book *The Dust of Death*, considered the youthful outburst
against society in a totally different light. To him the counterculture was a great refusal,
“a generation’s attempt to live counter to anything less than the highest values, principles,
ideals, and goals of previous generations.” Guinness asserts that the counterculture
created a crisis in meaning in America, a belief that is the driving force behind many of
the current anti-counterculture works. Jay Stevens, in his book *Storming Heaven*,
contends there were good reasons for such youthful defiance, “…Everything about them,
their hair, their music, their clothes, the way they talked, their heroes, their dreams, all
were considered illegitimate by a generation which couldn’t stop patting itself on the
back over how democratic and liberal it was.”

In addition to the lack of adult criticism of mainstream American culture, Roszak
mentions several other key factors that hotwired this generation for dissent. Many of
them were the beneficiaries of a very popular and permissive child-rearing program
outlined by Dr. Spock. This popular author advised a humanistic approach to parenting
which encouraged children to explore the world around them and not be afraid to ask
questions, a method in direct opposition to the “don’t speak until you are spoken to”
directions of previous generations. When mom and dad weren’t doting over them mass
media, especially television was.
Postwar children were the first generation raised with the new medium of television, and it became a primary force in their upbringing. Television taught children powerful lessons: conformity, respect for social authority, and above all the importance of consumption. Television was a magic mirror on the world that both reflected and distorted reality, transmitting misleading images of ideal family life to millions of children. What children saw was not the world around them, but a world without social conflict, poverty, or diversity, in which nearly everyone lived a white, middle-class life.\textsuperscript{13}

Additionally, the baby boomers had massive economic power and corporate America was willing and ready to cater to their needs and wants. Finally, more middle class youth were going to college. This exposed them to countercultural ideas that permeated higher education.\textsuperscript{14} Such a saturation of liberal bias on American university campuses was a serious problem according to Roger Kimball. In his book, \textit{The Long March}, the college campuses of the 1960s “were mere rallying points for a revolution in sensibility, a revolution that brought together radical politics, drug abuse, sexual libertinage, an obsession with rock music, exotic forms of spiritual titillation, a generalized antibourgeois animus and an attack on the intellectual and moral foundations of the entire humanistic enterprise.”\textsuperscript{15} As a counterpoint, Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle mention, in their collection of essays, \textit{Imagine Nation}, that colleges in the 60s were under heavy influence by the government and big business. “The American higher education system geared up to perpetuate the new technocracy by educating young citizens, particularly white middle-class males, for compliantly assuming their rightful place in the corporate hierarchy.”\textsuperscript{16} Such an observation isn’t hard to dispute when Clark Kerr, president of the California University system at the time, made it clear that his master plan for higher education was in the service of government and corporate interests
“The university is being called upon ... to respond to the expanding claims of national service; to merge its activity with industry as never before; to adapt to and rechannel new intellectual currents.”\(^{17}\) This rechanneling certainly helped to fortify the imperatives of mainstream American culture.

The fact that it was the youth who carried the flag of dissent during the 60s was not an ideal situation according to Roszak. He felt that they did not have the skills to bear such a responsibility. “It is indeed tragic that in a crisis that demands the tact and wisdom of maturity, everything that looks hopeful in our culture should be building from scratch – as must be the case when the builders are absolute beginners.”\(^{18}\) To Roszak, the youth had almost nothing to offer except energy and healthy instincts. He made an accurate prediction when he worried that the youth’s “white-hot discontent” would not be able to sustain itself for long. “The project of building a sophisticated framework of thought atop those instincts is rather like trying to graft an oak tree upon a wildflower. How to sustain the oak tree?”\(^{19}\) Indeed by the early 1970s an economic downturn and the election of Nixon and his anti-counterculture platform along with him ending the draft brought youthful utopian ideas down to earth.

Although there were significant numbers of youth involved in the counterculture to make it a national phenomenon, they were, according to Roszak, still a minority. Not part of this phenomenon where the majority of baby boomer teens who were completely satisfied with American culture and eager to take part in it. Roszak also believes it did not include the New Left youth and the traditional Marxists, for they too were still very much attached to the technocratic system. This distinction, that the counterculture
wanted more than a revolution, that it wanted to redesign American culture itself, was the main difference between the activist youth and the drop outs of the counterculture. Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle point out, “In this cosmology, if one wanted to effect long-lasting social change, politics was understood to be epiphenomenal. The lever instead would need to be positioned so as to shift the culture, and the culture would be moved one person at a time.”

Likewise, the counterculture did not manage to attract a majority of the poor youth, who were fighting hard to get a share of the good things middle class life offered. As Roszak reflects, these lower class youth must have been baffled to see hippies, “the children of our new affluence dressing themselves in rags and tatters…and taking to the streets as panhandlers.” Disregarding the comforts of middle class life appeared to be a spoiled temper tantrum, a “neurotic discontent of those who cannot settle down gratefully to the responsibilities of life in an advanced industrial order.”

Roszak does not include the many African Americans who were involved in the civil rights and black power movements, which he saw as wholly separate and deserving of its own considerations. As Timothy Miller points out in his book *The Hippies and American Values*, “Black hippies were unusual. Blacks interested in dissent from the prevailing culture tended to be more interested in racial-political than flower-child activities.”

The counterculture respected the battles the New Left, the poor and the African American community were fighting, but to them the real conflict was the one each individual needed to face with himself. As counterculture spokesman Timothy Leary
pointed out, “If all the negroes and left wing college students had Cadillacs and full control of society, they would still be involved in an anthill social system unless they opened themselves up first.” What emerges from these observations then is a group of young, middle class children raised within the comforts of the “American Dream” who decided to opt out of all that it stood for. This seeming contradiction is well explained by Frank Musgrove,

The Counterculture is a revolt of the unoppressed. It is a response not to constraint, but to openness. It is a search for new interactional norms in the widening, more diffuse margins of postindustrial societies. It is most satisfactorily conceptualized not as a revolutionary ideology, but as an exploratory curriculum, a range of experiences and exposures through which the postmodern generation seeks a sense of significance.

The counterculture shared a deep-seated belief with the activist youth of the New Left that American society was in crisis. The difference between the two was a matter of methods. Some histories of the 1960s tend to lump the New Left and the hippies under one movement, however, they are distinct enough from each other for many authors to focus on them separately. The members of the counterculture were known as “heads” because they took the revolution inwards towards more personal changes while the members of the New Left were known as “fists” because they worked to change the social system through active participation. Besides these different approaches, the two bled into one another more often than not. “…the great majority of New Leftists lived the cultural values of the hippies, smoking marijuana, engaging in liberated sex, and often living communally.”
Although they recognized the importance of protesting contemporary problems such as the Vietnam War, racial injustice, and poverty, the heads believed that the source of these problems lay in the structure of society itself. And their main concern, according to Roszak, was to “alter the total cultural context within which our daily politics takes place.” Roszak calls this cultural context the “technocracy”. The problems that arise from this technocracy are what Roszak uses as his central complaint against mainstream American culture. Roszak defines the technocracy as “An industrial society when it has reached a level of social organization and engineering that orchestrates the totality of human experience.” This orchestration is so complex that on an individual level nothing is readily apparent to the non-technical citizen. “Within such a society, the citizen, confronted by bewildering bigness and complexity, finds it necessary to defer on all matters to those who know better.”

Reich made a similar case against modern American society, and notes the precedence a technological culture takes over the individual, “Organizations and bureaucracy, which are applications of technology to social institutions, increasingly dictate how we shall live our lives, with the logic of organization taking precedence over any other values.” Roszak states that this relinquishing of decision-making by the citizens allows for the technocracy’s authority to be validated not by the citizens, but by itself. It is a system “in which those who govern, justify themselves by appeal to technical experts who, in turn, justify themselves by appeal to scientific forms of knowledge. And beyond the authority of science, there is no appeal.” There is little debate that modern western society trusts science as the ultimate tool for reason, and reason as the ultimate tool for perceiving reality. “Its assumptions
about reality and its values become as unobtrusively pervasive as the air we breathe.”

This then creates a system that is unquestionable because it “assumes a position similar to that of the purely neutral umpire” and “the umpire is the most significant figure in the game, since he alone sets the limits and goals of the competition and judges the contenders.” This is a dangerous situation, as Roszak points out “When any system of politics devours the surrounding culture, we have totalitarianism, the attempt to bring the whole of life under authoritarian control.” This technocratic totalitarianism does not look like the coercive, brutal regimes of the past, but instead, “prefers to charm conformity from us by exploiting our deep-seated commitment to the scientific world-view and by manipulating the securities and creature comforts of the industrial affluence which science has given us.”

According to both Roszak and Reich, the result of modern society’s dominance over the individual is alienation. Reich notices alienation in the very structure of American communities, “The great organizations to which most people give their working day, and the apartments and suburbs to which they return at night, are equally places of loneliness and alienation.” Roszak considers alienation dangerous in that it can lead to “the self righteous use of others as mere objects.” Reich warns it can lead to an even more devastating result, the loss of the self. “Beginning with school, if not before, an individual is systematically stripped of his imagination, his creativity, his heritage, his dreams, and his personal uniqueness, in order to style him into a productive unit for a mass, technological society.” Reich contends that the smothering of the individual by society happens because as civilization has changed more rapidly, the
accompanying consciousness of its inhabitants don’t have time to catch up, and they lose touch with reality.\textsuperscript{33} The alternative consciousness that the counterculture nurtured was, to both Reich and Roszak, not only in touch with the realities of the time, but the only hope that America might realize that the technocracy was the underlying cause of its major ills. Roszak casts a final judgment on the technocracy by criticizing its ultimate achievement, the atomic bomb:

The counterculture takes its stand against the background of this absolute evil, an evil which is not defined by the sheer fact of the bomb, but by the total ethos of the bomb, in which our politics, our public morality, our economic life, our intellectual endeavors are now embedded with a wealth of ingenious rationalization. We are a civilization sunk in an unshakeable commitment to genocide, gambling madly with the universal extermination of our species. And how viciously we ravish our sense of humanity to pretend, even for a day, that such horror can be accepted as ‘normal’ as ‘necessary’!\textsuperscript{34}

The youth involved in the counterculture deliberately shed the roles they were expected to play in American culture in hopes of creating new ones. They tried on the values and norms of other fringe groups like costumes from an old chest. The costume that fit them best was a black turtleneck sweater from the Beats of the 1950s. There is much similarity in purpose and style among these two groups. “The Beat generation as it emerged in the United States was a form of protest by disengagement – that is, it did not fight the mainstream social order, but ignored it. It was the early manifestation of ‘dropping out’.

Some of the beats, like Alan Ginsberg, were adopted as adult leaders of the counterculture. “More than a poet, he has become for the disaffiliated young of America and much of Europe, the vagabond proselytizer whose poems are but a subsidiary way of publicizing the new consciousness he embodies and the techniques for
its cultivation.”

Roger Kimbal expresses a disdain for the counterculture’s association with the beats. “Their programmatic anti-Americanism, their avid celebration of drug abuse, their squalid, promiscuous sex lives, their pseudo-spirituality, their attack on rationality and their degradation of intellectual standards, their aggressive narcissism and juvenile political posturing: in all this and more, the Beats were every bit as advanced as any sixties radical.”

The Civil Rights movement of the 50s and 60s inspired many marginalized groups in America to demand change. The youth involved in the New Left were especially in debt to its methods of non-violent civil disobedience. However, for the members of the counterculture, the greatest influence came from black culture itself,

It was black music, in the form of rock ‘n’ roll, which first offered teen-agers an alternative to their own sentimental and insipid music. And it was the hip black life-style, with its contempt for white middle-class values and its affirmation of the sensual, earthy, and the rebellious elements in man, that gave high school and college students something to copy instead of the existing pattern.

From Native Americans the counterculture would adopt a romantic vision of living in harmony with nature. Part of this attraction was towards its non-materialistic lifestyle. Allen Cohen, founder of The San Francisco Oracle asked his readers, “What if pre-industrial cultures had it right? What if key aspects of American culture, like the materialist striving for individual status, were a wrong turn?” Also admired by the counterculture was the inner journey of the Native American shaman. “Although much of the counterculture search for spiritual insight would revolve around hallucinogenic drugs and Eastern mysticism, playing Indian also offered a familiar and powerful path to the reassuring fixity of ultimate enlightenment.”
Although the counterculture owes much of its inspiration to many of the other dissenting groups in America, Roszak points out that it didn’t wait long to forge its own path. “The youth have taken the voices of dissent off the bookshelves of adults and torn it out of the books and journals an older generation of radicals authored, and they have fashioned it into a style of life.” Despite the counterculture’s refusal to set an agenda, some values began to gain general acceptance. In direct opposition to the conservative and traditional minded values of their parents, the youth of the counterculture experimented with sex, drugs and music as vehicles for self-discovery and liberation. Stevens notes the connection between the three in an interview with a Haight Street resident of the time, “Our secret formula was grass, LSD, meditation, hot music, consolidation and a joyous sexuality.” This secret formula led to a massive creative outburst in lifestyles and the arts that helped to solidify the counterculture as a true alternative culture within the U.S. Whether or not the values and norms of the counterculture were a synthesis or a rip-off of other cultures, they would soon affect a lasting change on American society.

There was never to be a single “unified dream theory” that the counterculture would adopt, primarily because the one idea that was universal among its members was a deep respect for everyone’s right to "do your own thing". As Miller explains, “…The hippy creed was ‘If it feels good, then do it so long as it doesn’t hurt anyone else.’ Hippies were perhaps the first to detect the anomaly that American society had seen an
exponential growth in leisure, yet was still suspicious of fun for its own sake.” One by-
product of this philosophy was the general rejection of work in the form of careers. The
counterculture did not reject productive activity. A large number of the counterculture
worked in arts and crafts trades that focused on self-employment and the freedoms that
went along with those activities. However, it did despise organized production that leads
to the bureaucratic separation between the laborer and the product. Frank Musgrove
explains, “Bureaucracies ration and graduate success, they under-utilize talent and set
limits to what the personality can achieve. They create artificial scarcities of human
resourcefulness. Success is mapped out in advance, the stages by which the individual
proceeds are pre-ordained.” Not only did this belief lead to many youth’s defiant
rejection of traditional roles like following a career path, but it also emphasized a general
avoidance of other people's expectations, even among one’s friends and allies. Such
avoidance isn’t much of a problem when one is left alone to do one’s own thing, or when
collaborating with a few like-minded individuals, but it does endanger large group
victories so sought after by most social movements. Much of the apparent lack of
organization the movement was criticized for was a direct result of this deeply held value.

The use of hallucinogenic drugs (primarily marijuana, LSD and psychoactive
mushrooms) was a unifying experience for members of the counterculture. There were
many reasons for the popularity of hallucinogens, but most fell under three categories;
drugs were fun, they were anti-establishment and they were a tool for spiritual growth.
Despite the propaganda put out by the U.S. government like *Reefer Madness* and
sensationalist news spotlighting permanently psychotic victims of bad LSD trips, literally
millions of Baby Boomers used and enjoyed hallucinogens. The National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse found in 1972 that 24 million Americans had smoked marijuana, affecting over 40 percent of the 22 to 25 age group.⁴⁵

A large percentage of dope users reported a life altering experience. Many specifically mentioned that they became extremely aware of both the incredible beauty of life and the ugly nature of modern society. “LSD put this into perspective, and by doing so (as Timothy Leary tirelessly pointed out) it opened up the possibility of reprogramming oneself; using LSD the games could be examined, the defenses leveled, and better strategies adopted.”⁴⁶ David Farber asserts that the intentional use of LSD as a tool for restructuring the social map was a central idea within the counterculture. In effect, they were using dope to rethink who they were and how they wanted to live. Allen Cohen, founder of The San Francisco Oracle explains why LSD was such a powerful tool. “It was the rocket engine of most of the social or creative tendencies that were emerging in the 1960s. It sped up change by opening a direct pathway to the creative and mystical insights that visionaries, artists and saints have sought and experienced and communicated throughout the ages…”⁴⁷ One such insight focused on the problems an inflated ego creates when it comes to maintaining social harmony. Roszak notes that the unifying experience that came from experimenting with drugs was a healthy assault on the ego “…this is what the counterculture undertakes when, by way of its mystical tendencies or the drug experience; it assault[s] the reality of the ego as an isolable, purely cerebral unit of identity.”⁴⁸
However, Roszak was very critical of people like Timothy Leary who promoted drug use as a means to instant enlightenment:

“What if the psychedelic boosters had their way then, and American society could get legally turned on? …would the revolution have been achieved? Would we suddenly find ourselves blessed with a society of love, gentleness, innocence, freedom? If that were so, what should we have to say about ourselves regarding the integrity of our organism? Should we not have to admit that the behavioral technicians have been right from the start? That we are indeed, the bundle of electrochemical circuitry they tell us we are – and not persons at all who have it in our nature to achieve enlightenment by native ingenuity and a deal of hard growing.”

Guinness points out that many who deliberately sought to change their lives through drugs ended up becoming more detached and powerless than before. “Many take drugs to escape alienation, only to find these drugs tighten the screw further. For one thing, the very drive to transcend implies a degree of alienation.” At the same time, Roszak was also critical of adults who blamed drugs as the cause of contemporary youthful malcontent.

“Unwilling to blame themselves for the alienation of their children, mother and father have decided to blame the drugs. So the psychedelics become the convenient scapegoat for the misbehavior of the young… It wasn’t bootleg liquor that created the bohemianism of the lost generation, and it isn’t the dope that has bred the beat-hip generation.”

Stevens takes this criticism further by pointing out that America’s adults were already addicted; 123 million prescriptions for tranquilizers and sedatives were written in 1965 alone. The difference was those drugs were manufactured by pharmaceutical companies and endorsed by society because they kept the technocracy running smoothly.
“…tranquilizers and sedatives were okay because they damped down the fires of life; they stupefied the mind rather than opening up its glorious, ecstatic and sometimes dangerous depths.”

The fact that hallucinogenic drugs were getting members of the counter culture in tune with their spiritual side was one of the defining characteristics of the movement according to Roszak. He pinpoints the focus of countercultural spirituality to be “grounded in an intensive examination of the self, of the buried wealth of personal consciousness…the trip is inward, toward deeper levels of self examination.” Roszak believed the surge in spirituality within the counterculture was another reaction against the technocracy and its inability to accept human dimensions outside of scientific inquiry.

…there is a powerful and important force at work in this wholesale willingness of the young to scrap our cultures’ entrenched prejudices against myth, religion, and ritual. The life of Reason (with a capital R) has all too obviously failed to bring us the agenda of civilized improvements the Voltaires and Condorcets once foresaw.

Over time, the hippies who were serious about spirituality began to rely less on drugs, and more on meditation to guide their inner journeys. They also started to examine in earnest the spiritual texts they had originally only glanced at. Many would join sects, follow gurus or join groups like the Esalen Institute, a human potential movement. Michael Murphy, one of the co-founders, described what was happening this way, “I’ve always thought of the beats as the first wave on the beach. The hippies were the second and now maybe we’re getting a third.” Out of this third wave would emerge various paths of new age spirituality such as holistic health, transpersonal psychology, yoga and other eastern traditions.
According to David Allyn, author of *Make Love Not War: The Sexual revolution, An Unfettered History*, much of the sexual revolution was more evolutionary than revolutionary, however, the 60s did see a surge. The sexual revolution is often treated historically as its own legitimate topic; however, most of these accounts give credit to the counterculture for being a major catalyst for the massive change in sexual attitudes and mores that occurred in the 1960s.

Prior to Gurley Brown’s *Sex and the Single Girl*, women lived under the shadow of the double standard. Men were expected to play the field before marriage, but for women it “could destroy a woman’s reputation, cost her closest friends, wreck her marriage.”56 The Victorian morals present in America at the time had several cruel implications for women. The constant insistence that women were asexual and any interest in sex categorized them as deranged prevented many women from having a healthy sexual relationship with themselves and their lovers. Even worse, a woman who showed any interest in sex effectively forfeited her right to say no, leading to many rapes. Rape victims were deemed impure for marriage and were often blamed for the assaults.57

The sexual inequality was psychologically linked to the political inequality as Alexander King, editor of *Life Magazine* spoke the words of many men, “I haven’t the slightest doubt that this absolute, unquestioned equality is a great mistake and in violation of all natural laws.”58 For many reasons these Victorian values were largely rejected by
baby boomers; medical advances like the pill, and cures for venereal diseases made sex less dangerous, the Kinsey reports revealed the vast difference between the mainstream America’s values and its actions behind closed doors, and members of the counterculture openly promoted nudity and joyous sexuality for everyone. David Allyn explains, “Most of the young baby boomers who joined intentional communities (i.e. communes) also wanted to escape the ridged rules of middle-class morality. They intended to have sex when, where, and with whom they pleased.”

This freedom of expression was at the heart of the relationship between the counterculture and the sexual revolution according to sexologist Albert Ellis as he wrote to another colleague in the late 60s,

> But I believe that any sane society, if one ever existed (which, to my knowledge, has never been the case), would put MINIMAL and NECESSARY restraints, rather than MAXIMAL and UNNECESSARY ones, on the sex drives -- just as I believe that any sane society should put MINIMAL and NECESSARY restraints on man's urge to talk, write, and vote freely.

This open freedom of expression among members in the counterculture not only allowed women equal access to their sexuality, it also allowed people to experience same sex relationships without the condemnation and harassment given by mainstream society.

Unfortunately, in the beginning the men in the counterculture still held many traditional sexist attitudes and sex-role conventions that left women in the house with the children as they went to “do their own thing”. However, as intentional communities evolved many adopted more egalitarian relationships. “The simple fact that many women lived in close proximity made communes an easy place for women’s groups to develop, and consciousness raising among women (and sometimes men) was thus widespread”

Much of the sexual revolution and the women’s rights movement was to evolve outside
of the counterculture, but many of the originators of these movements were awakened to
gender inequality within its structure of communal living.

*Stop, Hey, What’s that sound?*
*Rock & Roll and the Human Be-Ins*

Although pop music was thoroughly ingrained within mainstream capitalist society, it was quite often subversive to the established order. It was thus through pop music that the counterculture found its most effective means of transmitting its values. The psychedelic sound that emerged from the Bay Area in California was electronically amplified rock and roll. It was played loud so that the beat would penetrate into your bones. It was a primitive sound played with 20th century electrified instruments.

Psychedelic philosopher Chet Anderson explained, “Rock is a tribal phenomenon and constitutes what may be called a twentieth century magic. . . . Rock is creating the social rituals of the future.”62 These new social rituals were and still are the target of much criticism. Alan Bloom, author of *The Closing of the American Mind* condemned rock as just another counterculture addiction “Rock music provides premature ecstasy and, in this respect, is like the drugs with which it is allied. It artificially produces the exaltation naturally attached to the completion of the greatest endeavors – victory in a just war, consummated love, artistic creation, religious devotion, and discovery of the truth.”63

The rock and roll of the Counterculture was envisioned as a shared experience between performer and audience and the ultimate expression of this idea was the rock festival. “Unlike the traditional pop package show, put together for the fans out there, the rock festival – in its length, its size, its setting, its reference to folk tradition – was an
attempt to provide materially the experience of community that the music expressed symbolically." This experience became a lifestyle for many. Several of the more prominent bands, such as The Grateful Dead developed an extended family of fans and a gypsy lifestyle was taken on the road as they followed the band on its never ending tour. Rock festivals not only recruited and retained people for the counterculture; they also helped build commitment and inspiration through connection and communication.

Many of the festival attendants believed that the intense feeling of community was too good to only experience a few days at a time. “The definitive festival in this regard was, of course Woodstock, which was held in 1969. Reports on Woodstock in the underground press repeatedly stressed the feelings of unity. Everyone needed other people’s help, and everyone was ready to share what he had as many ways as it could be split up.” So for many, the next step was to create communes centered on the counterculture’s ethics.

*Drop Out: Runaways and Communal Living*

In 1966 the FBI reported 90,000 juvenile runaways; most of them were from middle class homes. Europe recorded over 10,000 “flower children” that were on their way to the Near East and India. Roszak explains the trend “…it is more a flight from than toward. Certainly for a youngster of seventeen, clearing out of the comfortable bosom of the middle class family to become a beggar is a formidable gesture of dissent. One makes light of it at the expense of ignoring a significant measure of our social health.” Many of the runaways ended up in urban centers, like California’s Bay Area,
where the counterculture was concentrating. In mass, the drop outs supported one another. “Everything was pooled – money, food, drugs, living arrangements. The underlying ethic was that the hippies were all members of an extended family, although the preferred word was tribe.”

As the economic recession and conservative backlash of the 1970s brought utopian ideas of instant cultural transformation down to earth, “Expectations ebbed that American society could be radically altered, whether by politics, revolution, or alchemy, while at the same time ‘practical liberation’ on the level of lifestyle became the countercultural mode.” The most apparent lifestyle change was the rise of communes. “Even while hippie stories were fading from the headlines to the back pages and then out of the public eye altogether, hip communes of every genera imaginable were silently cropping out of the earth by the hundreds.”

The communal movement in the 1960s is the central subject of many historical accounts on the counterculture. There has been much documentation on the numbers, kinds and methods of communes that sprang up in the 1960s as well as several extensive surveys conducted on ex-members from this time period. Roszak credits the popularity of communal living to a reaction against the alienation brought forth by modern industrial society.

In a world which more and more we think of society as the subordinate adjunct of a gigantic technological mechanism…the young begin to speak of such impracticalities as community and participative democracy. Thus they revert to a style of human relations that characterizes village and tribe, insisting that real politics can only take place in the deeply personal confrontations these now obsolete social forms allow.
The majority of commune members had migrated from the cities and suburbs that created this alienation. What they wanted most, when they took to the commune, was a deeper connection with not just those they lived with, but with the land they were living on. “The rural impulse was a part of the hippie preference for the natural over the artificial, the organic over the plastic. In the country, a clan could grow and consume its own food free of contaminants, breath clean air, be naked at will, be close to nature and to the cosmic forces. Getting clean and pure and back to basics was a major part of the communal equation.”

Some of the back to nature counterculturists were strictly anti-technology and focused on a non-mechanized relationship to the land, while others began to use alternative technologies as a way to gain independence from “the grid” driven by nonrenewable fossil fuels. Their argument for using these alternative technologies was, “…if technology deployed in an amoral and unecological fashion crated the social and environmental problems of industrial capitalism, then perhaps technology used morally and ecologically could create a utopian future.” After the OPEC cartel’s oil embargo of 1973, the environmental and alternative technology movements gained widespread respect from individuals outside of the counterculture through publications like The Whole Earth Catalog and inspiring designers like Buckminster Fuller. Fuller was best known for his concept of ‘dymaxion’ design that focused on doing the most with less. His most famous creation was the geodesic dome, which “epitomized the ideal of appropriate technology, using the most sophisticated design principles and the latest technologies to make more with less.”
Children were present in a majority of communes, and so the structure of the nuclear family was widened to include the entire community. “Children were typically considered part of the communal family, children of all the adults and siblings of all the other children, although usually birth or adoptive parents actually retained primary de facto responsibility for their well-being.” Timothy Miller, coordinator of the 60s Communes Project, interviewed over 500 persons who had lived in the 1960s era communes. The interviewees who grew up as children in the communes reported a great deal of positive experiences from their childhoods but most agreed that they were not supervised closely and parents were often lax about discipline. “Most parents who raised their children on communes are happy with the ways that their offspring have turned out, and the children themselves – now solidly into adulthood, of course – tend to see their time at the commune as having been free and blissful.” Miller notes however that most of the children of communes did not seek communal living for themselves.

Free Markets:
Co-opting Capitalism

The counterculture grew up during a time of such economic abundance that post-scarcity, the idea that America had reached a point where all our needs could be met, was thought to have become a permanent situation. Because of this belief, many members of the counterculture “felt that it would be easier to transcend capitalism than destroy it. Time was on their side, they maintained, because the coming leisure society would likely erode most of the strictures associated with capitalism.” Many of the new social
structures set up by the counterculture revolved around the free distribution of goods and services.

One group that exemplified this ethic was the Diggers. The Diggers called themselves “Life Actors” as they brought theatre into their own everyday activities in the real world. The purpose was to transform people’s paradigms about the world. One of their cornerstone activities was to give away free food from a garage they called the Free Frame of Reference “When the free food arrived, it would be placed on one side of the frame and the hungry would be made to walk through it to get at the stew and whatever else was being shared on the other side, changing their frame of reference as they did.”

The diggers also established free stores, free communal living and one of the first free clinics.

The free universities that sprung up as a reaction against the traditional bureaucratic structures formed by mainstream culture were another example. The free universities offered classes on subjects most valid to the counterculture’s members; exotic religions, touch and tenderness, total theatre, light show production. Roszak considered the free universities as another tool for communicating the new values and norms the counterculture was taking on. “At this point…the task of remodeling themselves, their way of life, their perceptions and sensitivities – rapidly takes precedence over the public task of changing institutions or policies.”

A less radical and more practical movement working to change the economic system was the rise in popularity of co-ops. These were worker-owned businesses designed to put the profits back into the hands of the producers. The cornerstone of this
movement was that community values were ingrained within the economic system of the co-op. There was a deep held belief that co-ops empowered the community as well as the individual. And the notion of entire communities revolving around co-ops was a revival of the commonwealth ideal. Craig Cox, in his book *Storefront Revolution* gave an example,

In a network such as the one that evolved in Minneapolis and St. Paul, for instance, the well-connected revolutionary would have purchased groceries at the neighborhood food cooperative, set up digs in a tenant-owned housing co-op or informal commune, and earned a living as part of a worker-owned or worker-managed business. The kids played at parent-run child-care centers while Mom and Dad were at work. If somebody got sick, the community clinic provided health care for free or on a sliding fee scale.  

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**Counterfeit Counterculture:**
**Assimilating the Counterculture**

The sheer numbers of the Baby Boomers forced much attention on them by many sectors of society, especially commercial interests. The counterculture became a profitable source of fashion, style and slogans that were quickly transformed into commodities to be sold back to the very group that created them. As media attention and commercialization of the counterculture grew, Roszak notices the disempowerment of the movement by corporate interests. “The inventing and flourishing of treacherous parodies of freedom, joy, and fulfillment becomes an indispensable form of social control under the technocracy. In all walks of life, image makers and public relations specialists assume greater and greater prominence.” What emerged from this commercialization of the counterculture, according to David Harvey, in his book *The Condition of Postmodernity*, is that the promotion and production of commodities turned into the
promotion and production of culture. “The deployment of advertising as the official art of capitalism brings advertising strategies into art, and art into advertising strategies.” The process of assimilation of the counterculture by the advertising industry is the central subject of Thomas Frank’s book *The Conquest of Cool*: “…rebel youth culture is used to promote not only specific products, but the general idea of life in the cyber revolution. Commercial fantasies of rebellion, liberation and outright “revolution” against the stultifying demands of mass society are commonplace almost to the point of invisibility in advertising, movies, and television programming.” Frank points out that the American corporate world was going through many transformations of its own at the time. In order to rid itself of the dead weight procedures and hierarchy that had accumulated over the years, many in corporate America admired the counterculture for its creative rebelliousness.

Like the young insurgents, people in more advanced reaches of the American corporate world deplored conformity distrusted routine, and encouraged resistance to established power. They welcomed the youth-led cultural revolution, not because they were secretly planning to subvert it or even because they believed it would allow them to tap a gigantic youth market (although this was, of course, a factor), but because they perceived in it a comrade in their own struggles to revitalize American business and the consumer order generally.

Nonetheless, the members of the counterculture were generally not impressed with the admiration by corporate America. Jean-Jacques Lebel called them the “containment industry” and as Miller points out, it created symbolic freedom and liberation through advertising and comodification as a substitute for real freedom and liberation. The commercialization of the counterculture convinced many of its members to disappear from the public scene. Frank notes, “…as early as the fall of 1967,
the San Francisco Diggers had held a funeral for ‘Hippie’, devoted to son of mass media.”

Around this same time, media attention for the counterculture began to fade and for most of America the movement took on the appearance of just a passing fad. This was not true for those who kept the counterculture alive at an individual level. Greta Nemiroff, professor and social commentator, wrote in the early 1980s, “Often we are victimized by our own naiveté at accepting the trivializing vision of the media which define and dismiss revolution as an event rather than seeing it as a long and incremental process.”

Sohnya Sayres states in her introduction to *The 60s without Apology* that both the positive and negative historical camps know that the counterculture was far more than just an event, “they are also parts of a whole ideological conflict, for which Gramsci’s term hegemony remains the most convenient shorthand, a conflict which includes contests over interpretations of history, and above all that crucial period both call the 60s.”

*Children of the Revolution: Countercultures in the 21st Century*

The youth involved in the counterculture did not just vanish after the conservative backlash of the 1980s took center stage. They grew up to become parents and to various degrees reentered American society. Ken Gofman and Dan Joy in their book, *Counterculture through the Ages: From Abraham to Acid House*, note that very few hippies from the 60s survived the 70s,
…expectations toward the baby boom generation as a transformational force had expanded to the bursting point. By 1972, that bubble burst and it became clear that the hippest generation was mostly made up of ordinary, selfish, unimaginative human beings ready to make accommodations with the particulars of capitalism and the customary requirements of adulthood--ready to drop back in and compromise with the system.  

The notion that baby boomers had become a selfish generation was promoted by journalist Tom Wolf declaring them the “me generation” and by Christopher Lasch’s book, *The Culture of Narcissism*. Lasch observed, “After the political turmoil of the sixties, Americans have retreated to purely personal preoccupations… getting in touch with their feelings, eating health food, taking lessons in ballet or belly-dancing, immersing themselves in wisdom of the East, jogging, learning how to relate, overcoming the fear of pleasure.” Lasch goes on to note the ironic trend towards consumerism that the counterculture had originally so adamantly rejected. “The propaganda of commodities serves a double function. First it upholds consumption as an alternative to protest or rebellion... In the second place, the propaganda of consumption turns alienation itself into a commodity. It addresses itself to the spiritual desolation of modern life and proposes consumption as the cure.” As self absorbed as many had become, some children of the counterculture did not give up the fight as they grew older. While the hippie element of the counterculture ran dry, hundreds of tributaries, from women’s liberation, the human potential psychologies, gay rights, to the environmental movement, flowed into mainstream culture, keeping “the personal is the political” alive and kicking.
One of these tributaries is spawning a whole new generation of dissenters. The idea of a personal computer, today so common as to be taken for granted, was a radical idea when computers were the property of corporate and governmental powers. In the early 1970s an underground network of highly educated corporate drop-outs began tinkering with small, home-based computers. Roszack points out, in his 2000 essay *From Satori to Silicon Valley*, a look back at the generation he so closely followed, that there was a high degree of countercultural influence within this group as its goal was to democratize access to information, to bring it back to the people.

The home computer terminal became the centerpiece of a sort of electronic populism. Computerized networks and bulletin boards would keep the tribes in touch, exchanging the vital data that the power elite was denying them. Clever hackers would penetrate the classified databanks that guarded corporate secrets and the mysteries of the state. The personal computer has provided a new form of tribalism for the youth to call their own, and they have done so in mass. Philippe Breton points out the striking comparison to the counterculture of the 1960s.

…the world of the Internet is, in its own way, today’s counterculture - a space in which you can leave the "ordinary world" behind you. People who spend their time on the Net are in a sense the "drop-outs" of today, and many of the angels. These current-day counterculturists have been dubbed “cyberpunks”, although their affiliation with the disillusioned cynical punk music of the late 70s is slim. Both groups, however, consider themselves to be marginalized dissenters in a totalitarian culture gone bad. Unfortunately, they may not have long before their electronic community is overrun. The Internet is no longer the open frontier it was even a few years ago. As the post 9/11 “War on Terror” is used as a justification for domestic spying, and as corporate
interests overrun personal homepages with spam, it has become clear that the hopes of an open democratic exchange in cyberspace will most likely become yet another utopian dream.

On the activist side, the new “fists” are members of a vast range of countercultural movements that use protest and civil disobedience as effectively as their parents had in the 60s. From the radical, decentralized actions of Earth First and Greenpeace to the growing anti-globalization protestors like those at the 1999 WTO meeting in Seattle Washington, a growing number of youth feel alienated and opposed to the technocracy that has grow far more powerful than it was in the 1960s. Kenneth Keniston examined the radicalization process of individuals in his *1967 Vietnam Summer Project* and noted six distinct steps people experienced on their way from dropping out of mainstream culture. These were:

a change in one’s perception of the social reality, some personal confrontation with social inequality or injustice, the beginnings of disillusionment with existing social reform institutions and systems, a radical reinterpretation of sociopolitical reality, some sort of personal activation and finally, a personal engagement in a project that led to an identification with the movement.  

It is clear that a large number of citizens in the United States today fit these descriptions and are members of a counterculture, with or without an official name attached to it.

Ken Gofman argues in the beginning of his book that, as there will always be countercultural elements within society, it is important to remember the valuable role they play throughout history. “Whenever people courageously and passionately engage in rule-challenging behaviors that attempt to liberate humans from oppressive limitations (or limitations perceived as being oppressive), excitement, conflict, and scandal – and
therefore engaging stories – are sure to follow.”95 The counterculture of the 60s epitomizes this observation, and with all it foibles, all of its childlike optimism, and all of its narcissistic tendencies, must be embraced as a scandalous and engaging story if educators truly want to break free from the stale and clichéd account found in most high school textbooks. The generation that formed the counterculture of the 1960s wasn’t the first, nor will it be the last mass opposition to mainstream culture in America. If we are to bridge the gap between the study of history and the practical application it may provide for us “today”, we must acknowledge and examine the important role countercultures play in the evolution of society as a servant to, not a master over, the individual.
LESSON PLAN

Introduction

The counterculture of the 1960s and how it changed mainstream American society is the topic of this lesson plan. The theme that students should understand and remember when the lesson is complete is twofold: By the 1960s, parts of mainstream American culture had become so extreme and homogenous that a counterculture of completely opposite values and norms emerged. Although its mantra to “tune in, turn on and drop out” was a call to retreat from the American dream, the counterculture nevertheless had a dramatic and lasting impact on the mainstream culture it had rejected.

This lesson plan consists of an introductory hook, five lessons and a test totaling 15, 50-minute periods. Very seldom do high school social studies teachers have the luxury to spend so much time on only one element within a given time period. A condensed version could be created by doing only one or two of the lessons and replacing the other lessons with more traditional lecture and reading assignments.

Prior Content Knowledge and Skills

Students will need to know the events that led up to the 1960s including the Cold War, the McCarthy Era and the Civil Rights Movement. Other events that occurred at the same time including the Free Speech Movement and the Vietnam War should have already been covered. Additionally, students should be familiar with American culture in the 1950s and 60s including; the rise of suburbia, the emergence of rock n’ roll,
consumerism and the affluent society, television, the creation of interstate highways, the baby-boomers and the Beats. In terms of skills, students will need to be able to take notes, work in a group, create displays, use a computer, search the web, write on a word processor, use primary documents, and participate in a Socratic seminar.

*Introductory Hook*

The hook that will draw students into this lesson and help them connect it to their own lives is presented as a mind-map discussion. Ask the students to take notes on everything that is put on the board. Write “High School” on the board and circle it. Ask the students to come up with brief phrases that describe what students are expected to do while in high school by their teachers and parents (go to class, eat lunch at the cafeteria, do homework, sit at desk, behave etc.) As they make suggestions write the phrases on the board, circle them and connect them to the “High School” bubble. Next ask students to come up with brief phrases that describe what students are expected to believe about high school by parents and teachers (school is important, it will get you a good job, learning is a lifelong pursuit etc.) As they make suggestions write the phrases on the board, underline them and connect them to the “High School” bubble. Write on the board. “All cultures are a reflection of their values and norms.” Then write “Values are the expectations that a culture has for its members.” Explain to the students that the values for their high school culture are underlined. Likewise, norms are behaviors that are considered normal for a culture’s members. The norms of their high school are circled. Explain to the students that all of these phrases combined are a description of
their high school culture. Next ask the students if they think the mind map they created is an accurate description of what high school is like for every student? When they say no, and they will say no, create a new “High School” bubble and ask them to describe some of the values and norms of some students that go against the values and norms of their parents and teachers. This will lead to a lively discussion. With both mind maps on the board, label the first one “dominate culture” and the second one “counterculture”. Then write underneath both “Every dominate culture has within it groups of people who are at odds with its values and norms, and who form countercultures in response.” Explain to the students that the topic for this lesson will be the counterculture of the 1960s and how it changed mainstream American society.

Lesson Content

Lesson One

Lesson one consists of two activities within one class period and a homework assignment. This lesson exposes students to the dominant culture of the late 1950s and the early 1960s and how it influenced the baby-boomer generation through an investigation into magazine ads and articles from that era. It then has students examine the board game Life as an example of the American dream. Homework assigned explores the benefits and challenges of being raised by parents who followed the advice of Doctor Benjamin Spock.

Start the lesson with a discussion about the concept of grouping people into the generation they were born in. Explain the common childhood experienced by baby
boomers born between 1943 and 1960. Describe the influence mass media has on a culture. In order for students to get a feel for American culture in the late 1950s and early 1960s they will need to be exposed to some examples of mass media at the time. Magazines are an excellent source. The teacher will need to gather old magazines from this time period. They can often be found at flea markets, used bookstores and yard sales. They are a great tool as they are actual artifacts from the time period. If this is not possible, there are many websites that have scanned images from magazines you can download and print up.

For this lesson you will ask students to break up into groups of three or four and examine selected pages from the magazines. There should be a variety of examples including advertisements, photo essays, short articles and magazine covers. Have each group answer the following questions: What are the people in these magazines like? What kinds of things are the men, women and the children doing? What seems to be the main concerns of the people in these magazines? From what you have learned about life in the 1950s and 60s, how accurate do these magazines portray American life at the time? After each group has had a chance to examine several examples, ask the students to list any commonalities they found among the people presented in these magazines. (middle class, consumers, families, stereotypical gender roles etc.) Ask them to also list people who were not included in these magazines? (minorities, the poor etc.) Finally ask them what can be said about American culture in the late 1950s and early 1960s from what they found in these magazines. (materialistic, narrow gender roles, non-inclusive etc.) Hold a class discussion and have students share
what they found. Compare the similarities and differences to what they would find in magazines today. Discuss what seems to have changed, and what hasn’t.

For the second part of lesson one, ask the students to share their thoughts on what the American dream is. Write their ideas on the board. (3-bedroom house, 2.5 kids, a dog, white picket fence etc.) Explain to the students that these stereotypes have been part of the American mythos for a long time. Have the class get back into their groups. Provide each group with the board game Life, by Milton Bradley. Have each group answer the following questions: What images are on the front of the box? (middleclass families in cars, icons of material success etc.) What are some of the images on the board game itself? (college, jobs, roulette wheel etc.) Read the rules. What is the object of the game? (The object is to pick a good career, try to get the highest salary possible, and end the game with the highest net worth.) What are some important parts of the game? (getting a job, having kids, buying a house, buying insurance and stocks, retiring etc.) Why do you think this game has been so popular in America for over 30 years? What things are not included in this game that might be important to some people in the real game of life? Who might be left out of this version of life? Once the groups have had sufficient time to answer the questions, hold a class discussion on their findings. Ask the students if they think American culture was open or closed to alternate ways of life other than the one presented in the media. Explain to the students that when a culture lacks diversity among its members it is called homogeneous in that it has a narrow range of acceptable values and norms. Have the class make a list of the common values and norms they found existed at this time. Make sure they write this list down in their notes,
as they will need it for lesson two. For homework, have the students read a short biography on Doctor Benjamin Spock. Present a brief introduction of Doctor Spock and his popularity among parents at the time. Tell the students to make a list of the differences between his approaches to child rearing as opposed to the previous methods parents used. The students will need this list for the next day’s lesson.

Lesson Two

Lesson two involves two class periods. This lesson looks at primary documents from the civil rights movement, the beat generation and the free speech movement as early signs that many people were not happy with the dominate culture in America in the 1960s. It ends with a Socratic seminar on how these dissenters may have opened up the eyes of some baby-boomer youth to the problems of society.

The first day of this lesson begins with a discussion of lesson one’s homework assignment. Instruct the students to take out their list on Doctor Spock’s child rearing methods. Ask the class to give their thoughts on why his child rearing methods might have made the baby boomer children more likely to question the values and norms of society than previous generations. (humanistic approach, children should be encouraged to explore and question, discouraged physical punishment etc.) Introduce this day’s activity by informing the class that the baby boomers were influenced by several prominent people who were vocally opposed to some of the values and norms in America. This activity has student groups answering questions aimed at three primary documents, Martin Luther King’s Nobel Prize acceptance speech, a portion of Allen Ginsberg’s poem Howl and Mario Savio’s Speech during the Free Speech Movement’s
sit-in. Each of these documents reveals norms and values that did not fit within the scope of American culture at the time. It will be the students’ task to compare these values and norms to those of mainstream American culture that they discovered in lesson one.

The teacher will need to make several copies of each of the documents mentioned above. The poem Howl is much longer than the other two documents and there are several passages with adult language that may not be appropriate for the classroom. The teacher should edit the poem so that it includes enough significant material for the students to grasp Ginsberg’s reflection on the problems his peers had with America. The historical significance of this poem and its influence on the counterculture is strong enough to justify its use within the classroom if the teacher needs to defend its inclusion. The room should be divided up into 3 stations, one for each document. At each station there should be several copies of the document in question and a large piece of butcher paper taped to the wall. “What complaints against American culture did this person have?” should be written at the top of each sheet. A marker should also be placed at each station. Divide the class into three groups. If the class is too large to make this practical, provide two or more stations for each document. Each group must assign one student reader and one student to write on the butcher paper.

Instruct the student readers to read the passage aloud to their group. When they have finished ask students to suggest key points that answer the question “What complaints against American culture did this person have?” The student writer should write down appropriate answers. Make sure the student writers leave enough room for
the other two groups. Rotate the class through each station. Have the final group of student writers bring their butcher paper to the front of the room as the rest of the class returns to their seats. Ask the students to copy the complaints of these individuals in their notes. They will not need to copy any duplicate answers. For homework the students should study the two lists they have created, that of mainstream American values and that of the complaints the three people they studied in this activity had. They will need to come to the next class prepared to participate in a Socratic seminar. The Socratic question they will explore is “How do you think young baby boomers might have reacted to the conflicting values and norms between mainstream American culture and its dissenters?” Each student will be responsible with having thought about answers to this question before the next class.

The second day of this lesson involves a Socratic seminar. It is assumed that the class had already conducted a Socratic seminar and knows its rules and procedures. If this is the class’s first time, the teacher should include an extra class period devoted to learning and practicing its rules and procedures before this lesson. Consult the “Socratic Seminar Rules and Procedures” worksheet in Appendix A. The teacher should remind the class of the rules and procedures and then begin the seminar by repeating the question, “How do you think young baby boomers might have reacted to the conflicting values and norms between mainstream American culture and its dissenters?” Make sure that each student has a chance to speak before those who have already spoken speak again. The teacher’s role is that of mediator and should not participate in the discussion unless it is to clarify the documents they have studied or to bring the class back to the main question if
it begins to digress. The teacher will also need to keep track of student participation and adherence to the rules so that they may be assessed in today’s activity. See Appendix A for the Socratic Seminar Assessment Form. After the seminar is over, the teacher should give a short lecture on how the baby boomers actually responded. The lecture should cover the information presented in the preceding historiography. Briefly, this would include the fact that most white, middle and upper class youth were willing to remain loyal to the values and norms of mainstream American culture. Americans of color and the poor were fighting hard to gain access to the American Dream and a few middle class youth joined in their cause as members of the New Left. However, a few middle class youth believed that the American dream was altogether wrong and what was really needed was a completely new culture. Instead of fighting the system, these youth decided to drop out of it and create their own. These youth were part of the counterculture of the 1960s and they were often called hippies. This term was derived from the hipster beats the counterculture was associated with. Let the class know that it will be the purpose of lesson 3 to discover what this new culture would become.

Lesson Three

Lesson Three involves a 5 day group project. Before the project begins, the class will explore the stereotypes they have about hippies and then explore a list of the values and norms of the counterculture as a comparison to these stereotypes. The teacher should put the word hippie on the board and circle it. Ask the students to suggest words that describe who a hippie is (long hair, tie-die t-shirt, dirty, barefoot, stoned etc.). The teacher should then pass out the “Values and Norms of the Counterculture” worksheet
found in Appendix A. Discuss the following: What parts do you agree and disagree with? What other groups within society agree with some of the values and norms of the counterculture? How different are these values and norms from the typical stereotype of hippies? Explain to the students that stereotypes often lead to intolerance. Remind the students of the stereotypes that were given to blacks, immigrants, and women that created intolerance. Discuss the problems that arise when a society does not accept a diversity of values and norms among its members. Explain to the students that the next lesson will require them to expose people to some of the values and norms of the counterculture as a way of increasing tolerance towards others.

The teacher should introduce the project by explaining to the class that they will explore the values and norms of the counterculture through its music, art and literature by creating a museum exhibit. The project will involve internet research, writing and drawing or constructing the exhibit. The class should be divided into small groups of two or three students each. Pass out the “Museum Exhibit Instructions” found in Appendix A. Read the instructions with the class and answer any questions they might have. The students should spend the rest of the class period looking for examples of each of the values and norms of the counterculture through its art music and literature online. A good way to expose the students to the music of the counterculture would be to play some of the important songs from this era while the students work on their exhibits for the rest of the week. Suggested websites have been provided in the instructions. Continue the research on day two. By day three the group should have enough examples of art music and literature for each of the values and norms of the counterculture. The students should
now discuss how they want to display each of the values and norms within the exhibit. Be sure to review with the students their options. They may either draw a layout or they can make a model of the entire exhibit. They will also provide a conceptual drawing of each display and add appropriate descriptive notes. The teacher will need to provide students with proper supplies. (paper, cardboard, glue, scissors, markers etc.) Continue the exhibit construction on day four. On day five students will display their exhibits to each other. They will rotate in their groups through each display and assess each others work. See the “Museum Exhibit Assessment Form” in Appendix A. The teacher should average the total scores for each group and compare them to his or her own assessment of the group’s performance. The teacher should end the class by reviewing the first part of this lesson plan’s theme; By the 1960s, parts of mainstream American culture had become so extreme and homogenous that a counterculture of completely opposite values and norms emerged.

Lesson Four

Lesson Four involves a two-day assignment in which students will read first hand accounts of children who lived on communes from the book *Wild Child.* Introduce this lesson by explaining to the students that the counterculture first arose within urban areas like San Francisco and New York, however as it grew many of its members decided that to really drop out of society they would need to head out to the wilderness. Taking with them their value of living simply and sharing resources, many members of the counterculture banded together into ‘tribes’ and live communally on the land. The children that grew up on the communes had both good and bad experiences. One book
that documents the experiences of girls who grew up on communes is called *Wild Child*. The teacher should assign one chapter (one girl’s personal account) to each student. There are 17 chapters, so two students may be assigned the same chapter. Ask each student to read their chapter and to answer the following questions: What was different about this girl’s childhood compared to other children who grew up in mainstream American households? What were some of the positive things this girl felt she got from her childhood? What were some of the negative things this girl felt she got from her childhood?

The second day of this lesson involves the class making a list of the positive and negative effects of girls who grew up on communes in the 1960s. Conclude the lesson with a writing prompt: What parts about being a child who grew up on communes would you like to experience and what parts would you not want to experience? Explain why or why not.

*Lesson Five*

Lesson Five is a three day lesson that concludes the study of the counterculture with a look at how it changed mainstream America and examines cyberculture, a current countercultural movement whose members are dropping out and creating their own culture within the frontier of cyberspace. The teacher should give a lecture on how the counterculture was assimilated into mainstream American culture and how mainstream American culture was changed both for the good and the bad by the counterculture. The teacher could use the preceding historiography as a resource for this lecture. The teacher should then discuss the fact that countercultures still exist today, as they always have.
One such current counterculture is called the cyberculture. It will be the students’ task to investigate what the cyberculture is, determine if it is a true counterculture and compare and contrast it to the counterculture of the 1960s.

The first two days of this lesson will require students to research the cyberculture online and fill out the worksheet “Is the Cyberculture a Counterculture?” found in Appendix A. The students may use a search engine to find appropriate resources, however, they should all visit the website Project Cyberpunk[^103] as it has most of the information they will need. Let the students know that they should be prepared for the next day’s Socratic seminar by addressing the question; how might the counterculture of the 1960s influenced countercultures today?

On the last day of this lesson students will participate in a Socratic seminar. Consult the “Socratic Seminar Rules and Procedures” worksheet in Appendix A. The teacher should remind the class of the rules and procedures and then begin the seminar by repeating the question; how might the counterculture of the 1960s influenced countercultures today? Make sure that each student has a chance to speak before those who have already spoken speak again. The teacher’s role is that of mediator and should not participate in the discussion unless it is to clarify the documents they have studied or to bring the class back to the main question if it begins to digress. The teacher will also need to keep track of student participation and adherence to the rules so that they may be assessed in today’s activity. See Appendix A for the “Socratic Seminar Assessment Form”. The teacher should end this lesson with a discussion of the theme for this lesson plan; By the 1960s,
parts of mainstream American culture had become so extreme and homogenous that a counterculture of completely opposite values and norms emerged. Although its mantra to ‘tune in, turn on and drop out’ was a call to retreat from the American dream, the counterculture nevertheless had a dramatic and lasting impact on the mainstream culture it had rejected.

The final day of the lesson plan involves students taking the “The Counterculture of the 1960s Test” provided in Appendix A.

Evaluation

This lesson plan consists of three non-traditional assessments. It includes two Socratic seminars that require the teacher to assess student participation and oral interpretation (See Appendix A for the “Socratic Seminar Assessment Form”). It also includes a group project in which students create a museum exhibit (See the “Exhibit Assessment Form” in Appendix A). The final assessment of student comprehension of the lesson uses a traditional, multiple choice and short essay test like the one provided in Appendix A.

Standards Alignment

National Standards

NSS-USH.5-12.9 – Era 9: Postwar United States (1945 to Early 1970s)

• Understands the economic boom and social transformation of postwar United States
• Understands how the Cold War and conflicts in Korea and Vietnam influenced domestic and international politics

• Understands domestic policies after World War II

• Understands the struggle for racial and gender equality and the extension of civil liberties

NSS-USH.9-12.10 – Era 10: Contemporary United States (1968 to the Present)

• Understands recent developments in foreign and domestic politics

• Understands economic, social, and cultural developments in contemporary United States

California Standards

• 11.3.5 Describe the principles of religious liberty found in the Establishment and Free Exercise clauses of the First Amendment, including the debate on the issue of separation of church and state.

• 11.8.4 Analyze new federal government spending on education (including the California Master Plan), defense, welfare, and interest on the national debt.

• 11.8.6 Discuss the diverse environmental regions of North America, their relationship to local economies, and the origins and prospects of environmental problems in those regions.

• 11.8.7 Describe the effects on society and the economy of technological developments since 1945, including the computer revolution, changes in communication, advances in medicine, and improvements in agricultural technology.
• 11.8.8 Discuss forms of popular culture, with emphasis on their origins and
geographic diffusion (e.g., jazz and other forms of popular music, professional
sports, architectural and artistic styles).

• 11.9.3 Trace the origins and geopolitical consequences (foreign and domestic) of
the Cold War and containment policy, including the following: The era of
McCarthyism, instances of domestic Communism (e.g., Alger Hiss) and
blacklisting; The Truman Doctrine; The Berlin Blockade; The Korean War; The
Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban Missile Crisis; Atomic testing in the
American West, "mutual assured destruction" doctrine, disarmament policies; The
Vietnam War; Latin American policy.

• 11.9.4 List the effects of foreign policy on domestic policies and vice versa (e.g.,
protests during the war in Vietnam, the "nuclear freeze" movement).

• 11.10.7 Analyze the women's rights movement from the era of Elizabeth Stanton
and Susan Anthony and the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the
movement launched in the 1960s, including differing perspectives on the roles of
women.

• 11.11.7 Explain how the federal, state, and local governments have responded to
demographic and social changes such as population shifts to the suburbs, racial
concentrations in the cities, Frostbelt-to-Sunbelt migration, international
migration, decline of family farms, increases in out-of-wedlock births, and drug
abuse.
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APPENDIX A:

Lesson Plan Materials
Socratic Seminar Rules and Procedures

Socrates is credited with formulating a method of dialogue known as the Socratic dialectic. (Dialectic means the art or practice of examining opinions or ideas logically.) Encouraging participants to sit in a circle, Socrates would draw knowledge from the group by presenting a series of deeply philosophical questions. Today Socratic Seminars are used in classrooms as a motivating form of group dialogue based on an open-ended question. A Socratic seminar consists of four elements:

1. **The text** – The source of the discussion.
2. **The question** - Reflects genuine curiosity and has no "right" answer.
3. **The leader** - Offers the initial question then plays a dual role as leader and participant. In this case the leader will be your teacher.
4. **The participants** – The students will need to study the text in advance, listen actively, and share ideas using evidence from the text for support.

A Socratic seminar is not a debate. Debates consist of two opposing sides which try to prove each other wrong. A Socratic Seminar is a collaborative discussion in which everyone works together toward a shared understanding.

**Every student must follow the following rules:**

1. A student may not participate in the seminar if they have not read the material.

2. The group must sit in a circle that allows all of the participants to make eye contact.

3. It is not necessary to raise your hand to speak. It is essential however, that you **listen attentively** and allow the speaker to complete their opinion without interruption.

4. If you are called on to give your opinion, but would rather not at the time, you may pass. However, you will need to contribute a response at least once during the dialog.

5. If you have already spoken once, you must wait until everyone has had a chance to speak before you contribute again.

6. Speak loud and clear without wasted words. Stick to the point currently under discussion; make notes about ideas you want to come back to. Remember it is essential that you support your opinion using direct references from the assigned text.

7. Respect all participates. **If you disagree do so in a mature and responsible manner.** Wait for the speaker to finish, and then say that you disagree with their point, but make sure you can support your opinion with something concrete from the text.
Socratic Seminar Assessment Form

As with any effective teaching strategy, scaffolding the instruction (pre, during and post activities) ensures the engagement and success of all students. During-seminar activities help kids stay on task, self-assess their contributions and involvement, establish pace and depth of discussion. Strategies might include:

- **Talking Chips** - Dispense equal number of "chips" to participants at start of discussion. Encourage each participant to use all chips, and no more.
- **Talking Chain** - Ask each participant (in turn) for a contribution.

**The Leader:** In a Socratic Seminar, the leader consciously demonstrates habits of mind that lead to a thoughtful exploration of the ideas in the text by keeping the discussion focused on the text, asking follow-up questions, helping participants clarify their positions when arguments become confused, and involving reluctant participants while restraining their more vocal peers.

**The Participants:** In a Socratic Seminar, participants study the text closely in advance, listen actively, share their ideas and questions in response to the ideas and questions of others, and search for evidence in the text to support their ideas. Eventually, when participants realize that the leader is not looking for right answers but is encouraging them to think out loud and to exchange ideas openly, they discover the excitement of exploring important issues through shared inquiry. This excitement creates willing participants, eager to examine ideas in a rigorous, thoughtful manner.

**Expectations of Participants in a Socratic Seminar:**

**Did the Participants...**

Cite reasons and evidence for their statements?
Use the text to find support?
Listen to others respectfully?
Stick with the subject?
Talk to each other, not just to the leader?
Paraphrase accurately?
Avoid inappropriate language (slang, sloppy diction, etc.)?
Ask for help to clear up confusion?
Support each other?
Avoid hostile exchanges?
Question others in a civil manner?
Seem prepared?

Guidelines for a Socratic Seminar:

1. The group must sit in a circle that allows all of the participants to make eye contact.

2. A diverse group is actually a positive to a seminar.

3. Read the material before the seminar is not an option. A student may not participate in the discussion if they have not thoroughly read the material. I suggest creating an outside circle for students who have not read the material. In the outside circle they are responsible for taking notes on the inner groups discussion.

4. Quiet is not bad; allow students adequate time to formulate their thoughts. One of the greatest skills being developed in a Socratic Seminar is critical thinking.

5. Allow the discussion to flow on its own. You want discussion to flow discussion. Even if the topic derails a little this can often provide valuable insight for the students.

6. To keep students on task with the discussion as the facilitator you may need to remind them to connect their discussion to the text.

7. A Socratic Seminar is not a two-way debate. If two students dominate the discussion you as the facilitator may need to ask another open-ended question and directly ask other students to answer the question.

8. Respect is another essential skill that the Socratic Seminar builds. You may want to consider a discussion or a short story that illustrates the concept of respect that you can use as pre-seminar material.

9. One students speaking at a time, and the other students actively listening in order to respond is the apex of a Socratic Seminar.

10. If students are still discussing items the following day or have additional questions that have risen overnight, then you will experience the fruit of a Socratic Seminar.
Read each of the following values and norms of the counterculture. After each one circle how much you agree or disagree with it (1 = I disagree with all of it, 2 = I disagree with most of it, 3 = I agree with half of it, 4 = I agree with most of it, 5 = I agree with all of it). Answer the two questions at the end.

- **Do Your Own Thing** – Do what you want as long as it doesn’t hurt anyone else. Don’t be forced to act and behave the way your parents and society tell you should. Be who you want to be.
  
  1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

- **Live Simply** – The fewer things you need to make you happy, the less you have to work and the more time you will have to do the things you like to do. Enjoy the things in life that are free. Share with others so that everyone has what they need.
  
  1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

- **Love is the Answer** – Hate and anger lead to fighting and war. Learn to accept others for who they are. Show kindness to others, even if they are not kind to you. Do not be ashamed of sex, its natural and healthy.
  
  1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

- **Explore Your Inner Self** – Meditate and commune with nature to help you find your inner voice. Explore many religions and find the parts of each that you like best. Use hallucinogenic drugs as a tool for spiritual growth.
  
  1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

- **Express Yourself** – Self expression brings joy. Don’t be afraid to try out new things. Dance, sing, play an instrument and write poems even if you have never done it before. Wear whatever you want, even if others don’t think it is normal.
  
  1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

- **Drop Out** – Society has gotten so bad that it can’t be fixed. Find others like you and live together as your own mini-society. If you can, get as far away from society as you can by joining a commune in the wilderness.
  
  1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

- How different are these values and norms from the typical stereotype of hippies?

- What other groups within society agree with some of the values and norms of the counterculture?
Museum Exhibit Instructions

You have been commissioned to create a museum exhibit highlighting the values and norms of the counterculture through its art music and literature. You will need to create six separate displays; Do Your Own Thing, Live Simply, Love Is the Answer, Explore Your Inner Self, Express Yourself, and Drop Out. Consult your notes and the “Values and Norms of the Counterculture” worksheet for a description of each.

You and your partner will need to find photos, artwork, lyrics and quotes from the 1960s that highlight each of these values and norms. Below is a list of suggested websites, however, you may also find others on your own.

- The 60s Heros: http://www.heroism.org/class/1960/CounterCulture.htm
- Photos of the 60s: http://americanhistory.si.edu/lisalaw/4.htm

After you have gathered enough material, you must put it together in a pleasing and informative way. The room your exhibit will be in is 20’ x 30’. You may place an entrance and an exit to the exhibit wherever you want. All six displays must fit within this space and allow enough room for patrons to move freely between each one. You must either build a scale model, or draw a floor plan clearly showing the placement of each display. Design, color, lighting and decorations should incorporate the psychedelic look and style of the counterculture in the 1960s.

You must also provide a conceptual drawing of what each display will look like. Be sure to use the photos, artwork, lyrics and quotes that you collected as part of your concepts. How these elements will be presented is up to you; you could show the photos on a flat screen display, play the music through a stereo system, flash quotes on the wall using a projector, include mood lighting like lava lamps, or black lights… be creative. Add any notes to the conceptual drawings that would help explain your vision.

You should use the Museum Exhibit Assessment Form as a way to improve on any weaknesses in your design.
Museum Exhibit Assessment Form

Names of group members: _________________________________

Rate the following elements on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest score.

Overall look and style of the exhibit 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10
Logic and accessibility of the exhibit’s layout 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10
Do Your Own Thing Display – information 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10
Do Your Own Thing Display – Creativity 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10
Live Simply – information 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10
Live Simply – Creativity 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10
Love Is the Answer – information 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10
Love Is the Answer – Creativity 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10
Explore Your Inner Self – information 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10
Explore Your Inner Self – Creativity 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10
Express Yourself – information 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10
Express Yourself – Creativity 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10
Drop Out – information 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10
Drop Out – Creativity 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10

Comments:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Is the Cyberculture a Counterculture?

Use the internet to research the cyberpunk movement and cyberculture in general (like http://project.cyberpunk.ru/idb/subculture.html) to answer the following questions.

1. What are the origins of cyberpunk?

2. What sort of future do the cyberpunks foresee?

3. What are some of the values of cyberculture?

4. What are some of the norms of cyberculture?

5. In what ways is cyberculture in opposition to mainstream American culture?

6. What is the difference between the way cyberculture relates to technology and the way the members of the counterculture in the 1960s did?

7. What sort of similarities are there between cyberculture and the counterculture of the 1960s?

8. Do you think cyberculture is a counterculture? Explain your answer.
The Counterculture of the 1960s Test

Name: _____________________________________

Multiple Choice Questions – Circle the best answer.

1) What is a counterculture?
   a) a cultural group that enhances the views of other cultures
   b) a cultural group whose values and norms are at odds with those of the social mainstream
   c) a cultural group whose values and norms are illegal
   d) a cultural group whose values and norms are above those of the social mainstream
   e) a cultural group that enhances the values and norms of the mainstream

2) What were some characteristics of mainstream American culture in the 1960s?
   a) pluralistic, flexible gender roles, egalitarian, agrarian
   b) homogeneous, flexible gender roles, materialistic, agrarian
   c) pluralistic, traditional gender roles, materialistic, agrarian
   d) homogeneous, traditional gender roles, materialistic, technocratic
   e) homogeneous, flexible gender roles, materialistic, technocratic

3) Who were the baby boomers?
   a) someone who was born during the period of economic prosperity after World War II
   b) someone who was born during an economic boom
   c) someone who was born during the 1960s
   d) someone who was born during the Great Depression
   e) someone who was born during the summer of love in 1967

4) What kind of child rearing methods did Dr. Benjamin Spock promote?
   a) strict, regimented, encouraging, relaxed
   b) humanistic, encouraging, intolerant, competitive
   c) strict, tolerant, regimented, relaxed
   d) humanistic, tolerant, encouraging, relaxed
   e) strict, regimented, intolerant, competitive
5) What were some dissenting groups in America that influenced the counterculture of the 1960s?
   a) the Civil Rights Movement and Women’s Liberation
   b) the Beats and the Space Program
   c) the Civil Rights Movement and the Beats
   d) the Beats and the GOP
   e) none of the above

6) Which of the following is not a reason why the counterculture emerged in the 1960s?
   a) The erosion of trust people had with authority figures
   b) Many were opposed to the Vietnam War
   c) The American Dream was not available to everyone
   d) An economic recession caused a lot of unemployment
   e) The Cold War caused a political witch hunt

7) Which of the following was not a value or norm of the counterculture of the 1960s?
   a) Drop out
   b) Be politically active
   c) Love is the answer
   d) Explore your inner self
   e) Do your own thing

8) What was the most extreme method of ‘dropping out’ of mainstream America?
   a) Living on the streets
   b) Not joining anything
   c) Joining the communist party
   d) Joining a commune
   e) Squatting in vacant houses

9) What were some of the ways mainstream American Culture was changed by the counterculture of the 1960s?
   a) Increased environmental concern
   b) More flexible gender roles
   c) An increase in the two parent family
   d) Both a and b
   e) Both b and c

10) What is one counterculture that exists in America today?
    a) College fraternities
    b) The National Rifle Association
    c) Cyberpunks
    d) Illegal immigrants
    e) The Boy Scouts
Essay Questions – Answer the following questions in paragraph form:

1) What important roles do you think countercultures play in the development of society? Provide some examples from the counterculture of the 1960s.

2) What dangers or problems do you think countercultures create within a society? Provide some examples from the counterculture of the 1960s.
The Counterculture of the 1960s Test: Answer Key

Multiple Choice Questions –

1) b
2) d
3) a
4) d
5) c
6) d
7) b
8) d
9) d
10) c

Essay Questions –

1) Students should mention the fact that countercultures provide society with alternatives to mainstream that may end up being better choices, they offer healthy criticism of societies weaknesses, they allow for a larger diversity of values and norms, they help bring about positive change and they tend to keep power holders accountable.

2) Students should mention the fact that countercultures tend to disrupt the normal flow of society, often clogging up or shutting down widely accepted systems, they can lead to protests and riots, they often attract fringe elements including radicals, criminals and utopians.
ENDNOTES


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