

# Peace, Love, and Misunderstanding: Representation of Hippie Counterculture in Selected Films

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**Karmen Jerolimov**

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Peace, Love, and Misunderstanding: Representation of Hippie  
Counterculture in Selected Films

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Zadar, 2020.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Inspired by the Beat Generation, a post-war literary movement notable for the denial of narrative values, quest of spirituality, reprobation of materialistic values, exploration of psychedelic drugs, and for challenging traditional views towards sexuality; communities of young people began to gather in several Human Be-In events, the major meeting points being San Francisco's Golden Gate Park and New York's Central Park, to raise ecological and cultural self-awareness, and protest against political centralization. Out of the aforementioned dissatisfied communities emerged a counterculture which marked the entire generation and whose influence is still evident to date – the hippie movement. The present study attempts to contribute to a better understanding of the motives which led to a creation of the counterculture, characteristics and mindset of the community members, their fashion to deal with the existing social situation, and the legacy they left to new generations that are willing to set off on a rebellious trip or to indulge themselves to be blown by winds of change.

The thesis will attempt to depict three movies originating from different eras, all of which, nonetheless, concentrate on the portrayal of the 1960s countercultural period marked by individuals who rejected the conventional norms, lifestyles, and ideology. More concretely, *Easy Rider* follows the adventures of two men who aspire to simply be themselves by experiencing the wilderness, the possibilities the road offers, and the remote places. However, they are received with differing amount of cordiality in different regions they pass through. Furthermore, *Hair* presents a young man who, on his way to a military base which will prepare him for his departure to Vietnam War, visits New York where he meets and soon affiliates with a group of commitment-free hippies. Lastly, *Wanderlust* introduces us to a young couple from New York, who, after becoming unemployed, on their way to their relative's place encounter a community whose ideology and customs puzzle the couple, but soon afterwards they realize they feel captivated.

The analysis of the work will comprise discussion on the prominent features that define the movement and its members through the perspective of the films, characters' traits, behaviors, mutual relationships, and general social ambience. It will also argue the ways protagonists rebel against imposed norms and policies. The research will additionally intend to analyze cinematographic means used in films to convey the protagonists' experiences common to the counterculture. Finally, we will summarize the messages films intended to convey, as well as their significance for the future.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the midst of a worldwide spread of political turmoil and social unrest, many youth movements arose with a goal to shift away from or even shake the social order and established authority. One of those movements was called the Beat Generation, whose prominent members were authors as are the likes of William Burroughs, Jack Kerouac, and Allen Ginsberg. The community emerged in New York City's West Village, where they, in spite of practicing bohemian lifestyle, consuming alcohol and drugs, endeavored to raise the society's consciousness. As a matter of fact, some of the contemporaries, as Charters informs (62), claim that Ginsberg's most famous poem, *Howl*, prompted them to unite in their ideas:

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving, hysterical naked,  
Dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix.

As Ashbolt suggests, it closely reflected their attitudes, conveying a deviation of the generation and a drive for a change; that is, so called "experience" (35). Their necessity to travel has roots in another work written by a Beat Generation literary figure, *On the Road*, a novel by Jack Kerouac. All things taken into consideration, the denial of the adaptation to the stereotyped lifestyle and social norms of the 1950s led to the separation from the restrictions of society, and a quest for different forms of fulfillment. And just as the Beats discarded the consumerist life as well as the concept of what characterized "straight life", their ideology was soon adopted by a newly formed community at the West Coast denominated *the hippies* (ibid 36).

The center of the alternative social current moved to San Francisco, precisely to the North Beach borough. Nevertheless, the rise in prices of the borough properties obliged them to relocate and settle in the district of Haight-Ashbury (ibid). It was reported by Fallon that the reputation the district enjoyed and fairly high life standards were due to the recently populated group of homosexuals, many of whom were key members of the Beats. Additionally, according to Howard, a part of black population that was expanding had started to arrive at the area in the 1950s (45). Therefore, the way the above mentioned circumstances changed enabled conditions for forming of a community whose main aim is to bring forward tolerance.

As Ashbolt informs, it can be stated that hippies organized a community connected by a common lifestyle and beliefs concerning drugs, music, fashion etc., which created a strong bond between the members regardless of the place they settled in (other significant hotspots being the Fillmore, Avalon Ballrooms, or Longshoremen's Hall) (41). Nevertheless, Haight-Ashbury as the primordial settlement of the participants of the movement owed part of its



uniqueness by being a social experiment whose influence went on to spread country-wide and farther. The concrete event that marked the foundation of the community in the district was the opening of the first Psychedelic Shop at the beginning of 1966 (ibid), which was, as Todd observes, a place that provided information on drugs and served as an assistance center for then still young hippie community (108).

Furthermore, they promoted anti-consumerism, independence and unique identity, whilst denying the label of a “movement”, and thriving to voice the views of the youth culture instead. On the contrary, Miller indicates that they designated themselves as “The people of Zero”, meaning without tradition, history, aspiring for new beginnings, and “being less rational and more mystical and emotional, and consisting of a blank slate on which to write a new world” (American Values 3). However, as Forman affirms, it was inevitable for the media to create a concept which would beg for approval or disapproval, enhancing, hence, the disagreement between the communities and the society.

In attempts to depict the notion of the hippie counterculture, Harris uses terms related to psychedelia, such as “visual arts, sex, drugs, new music, fashion” (9). For the counterculture and its supporters, extravagance channeled through these means was courageous as it implied a rebellion against the repressive morality of the establishment as well as against the older generation. Sociologist Beth Bailey confirms that a concept well-known to this day, “sex, drugs and rock ’n’ roll” (305) became a symbol of a countercultural protest against their parents, social norms, political systems, and government policies. To be specific, more and more people began to share skeptical attitudes towards their country leaders, their governments, and even towards their parents.

It was a period when many people believed in a possibility to shatter the current global capitalist system, as well as patriotic nationalisms around the globe. Duncan claims that numerous reasons for such a stance can be found in recent historical events, such as the construction of the Berlin Wall or the Iron Curtain that separated the East from the West, which led to the Cold War (156). The culmination of the atmosphere of discontent came with the US involvement in the Vietnam War. Many people were deeply concerned about what the negative sides of nationalism and imperialism were bringing about, which they expressed in the demonstrations around the country.

## 2.1. Communes

According to the majority of the counterculture's followers, their home country had gone astray from elevated goals it had embraced at its beginnings. It ceased to be the country of countless possibilities and hope, but seemed to be an oppressor. Effects of the latter, as Miller suggests, could be observed beyond its frontiers in form of its involvement in Vietnam War, which was assessed by the counterculture as an immoral move ("Sixties-Era Communes" 341). Young people who decided to shift from the existing lifestyle were in fact rejecting a system they considered to be under great influence of greed and materialism. Also, probably their primordial guiding principle was the country's symbol, individualism. They were determined to abandon common societal expectancies as was the pursuit of their own careers in favor of participating in the common welfare. In that way they aspired to unify self-realization within endeavors to contribute to the common purpose.

Other principles that were also present among the newly arrived communitarians included admiration of rural life. As many of them witnessed the decay of traditional American family, they intended to form a new family organization. Given that their ancestors had been raised with the Civil Rights movement, communitarians advocated racial equality, which usually englobed class and gender equality (ibid). While higher classes were not denied the residence in the commune, classless structure was preferred and prevailed in most of them.

In spite of the counterculture's aversion towards the finances, community, among others, consisted of an economic aspect. Obtaining the land or paying rent was not particularly hard since a lot of communes could count with generous patrons who often offered land for free as a residential area (ibid 342). In other cases they donated the money needed, or charged for rent which was not notably high when split among the members, the reason being that the financial value of desolated old farmhouses had rather decreased following rural depopulation in much of the countryside over the preceding decades (ibid). Regarding economical structure, the majority of the communities were unstructured. Members contributed financially with as much as they could, asking for supplies and working, usually on organic farms, in case of shortage of resources. Occasionally, the food stamps or welfare were provided by certain groups pertaining to a wider and wealthier society (ibid). The more organized and structured communes, on the other hand, frequently established certain businesses and industries, an example of which we will discuss through the prism of female movement in the following subchapter.

### **2.1.1. Rise of Feminism**

Although the counterculture strongly opposed the Establishment, Duncan holds that gender roles remained hierarchical (167). Communes were often established and dominated by males who, as elsewhere around the country and world, typically did not display gender awareness yet. Gender roles usually shaped everyday life and division of work. Namely, Miller notes that “men ran the tractors, while women cooked the brown rice and beans and nursed the babies” (“Sixties-Era Communes” 344).

However, a mutual living space shared intimately between recent acquaintances actually paved the way for even non-egalitarian communes to move towards feminism, given that women in close proximity were able to combine efforts in raising consciousness among men. (ibid). Also, as Bailey suggests, the counterculture aspired to promote “co-operation, nature, anti-materialism, and nonaggression” (312), concepts that women could take advantage of in order to gain power. Lemke-Santangelo adds that women soon realized they could enjoy both “thrill and excitement of breaking cultural taboos, and the sensual pleasures of sex, drugs, and rock and roll. Nor were commitment to countercultural feminism and pleasure mutually exclusive” (36). Women in communes showed in the first place courage that proved they were willing to fight against the stereotypes. They manifested the resistance by dropping out from homes, refusing to submit to rules of fashion, hairstyle, sex, roles, and other determined molds society imposed. In counterculture they found an opportunity to regain freedom, leave past behind, and create new personal relationships, which they aspired to raise to an improved social level as well.

As Duncan observes, though it was still necessary for women to assume a number of domestic roles, the significance of the latter was increased in the eyes of the commune (168). Due to the fact that the family structures are modified, the traditional household responsibilities such as maintenance chores and raising children are being distributed and perceived as worthy respectable duties for all of the members. Moreover, female participants of the communes are also beginning to be considered in decision making processes. Conover views this shift towards the sex role equality to be “due to the emphasis on general status leveling, sharing, and dedifferentiation” (459), which is showcased particularly in the structurally developed business in Twin Oaks commune.

### **2.1.2. Twin Oaks Peculiarity Setting an Example**

According to the study conducted by Conover, Twin Oaks, a commune located in the state of Virginia, was characterized by ideology which resembles others of this kind (460). It put the stress on individualism and experimental hedonism; however, drug consumption was not present. The feature that made Twin Oaks stand out among others which belonged to a group of alternate communes is that members developed an exceptionally systematically arranged communal structure. The most prominent factor of their economy is that entire income, ownership of significant goods, and expenses circulate exclusively within the commune (ibid).

With regards to work division, women and men were provided with equal admittance to all of the work: “Women did 31 percent of masculine work while men did 34 percent of feminine work” (ibid). It needs to be emphasized that these findings were obtained by following particular circumstances:

- 1) some women and some men performed tasks associated exclusively with their predetermined gender roles
- 2) some women clearly required to be conceded to perform masculine work, and
- 3) most members were in charge of diverse combination of work that would be related to a particular gender role in the major part of the society.

Such conditions demonstrate that limits which otherwise separate certain groups of tasks assigned to each gender become considerably vague here, and that division of labor occurs only after consensus has been reached.

Furthermore, work management is strongly decentralized in the way that there are more individuals in managing positions than members themselves. Occupying such position, nevertheless, provides no additional benefits, and yet again posts are filled by whoever volunteers. With respect to representation according to genders,

35 of 67 managerial positions were held by men. However, speaking about higher managerial positions, seventeen of 30 were held by female. Out of the 21 members holding important managerial positions, twelve were male. (ibid 461)

The above investigation suggests that Twin Oaks is a specific commune that has developed highly organized and successful system in agreement with significant level of gender equality in terms of work division, organization, and decision making. This one being the most famous one, many others soon started to follow its example.

## 2.2. Dope vs. Drugs

As learned from their own experience gained from consuming stimulating substances, the hippie community made the distinction more or less clear-cut. According to Miller (American Values 2), in their view the term dope included marijuana, peyote, mescaline, and LSD, while drugs encompassed amphetamines, methedrine, cocaine, and heroin. The difference entailed the positive effects of dope, and the harmful ones caused by drugs. As Duncan informs, a lot of hippies claimed that dope “helped them deal with the evils of the society, was comparable to a religious experience, put them in tune with nature, contributed to better sex, being mostly harmless and maybe even medicinal” (164).

On the other hand, LSD provides the consumer with some levels of reality which are usually not possible to perceive. People who have not tried it, that is, the majority of individuals not associated with the counterculture would denominate it “hallucinations”, alluding that what “acid” user notices while under influence of it are things which defy the concepts of reality. Meanwhile, in the words of Howard, the user confirms that part of his trip contains images and visions, but emphasizes that partially it involves an acknowledgement of certain unknown and advanced levels of reality as well (48). In order to illustrate the benefits of LSD to other people, Howard relates that some users draw a parallel using the metaphor of a microscope and a Middle Ages individual (ibid 49). Namely, the view into the microscope lens provides a whole new level of reality. It had not yet been discovered by the experts, and therefore, had not been displayed in public to common people, which would have made it an unimaginable theory. In the same way as LSD effects, it would have been labeled as having “hallucinations”, and perhaps opposed to by general public.

Furthermore, in the year 1967 methedrine replaced LSD as the most consumed drug in the district of Haight-Asbury. While it could not be proven that marijuana is particularly harmful, and LSD usage consequences are debatable; methedrine, nonetheless, was seen as a hazardous drug. Commonly known as “speed”, it supplies the consumer with a great deal of energy. As explained by a former addict, “It kills the appetite so, over time, malnutrition sets in. You’re in a weakened state and become susceptible to all kinds of disease” (ibid).

During the peak years of the movement, a certain pattern in drug use could be noticed in Haight-Asbury, and it was linked to the efficacy of the implementation of drug laws. Namely, Howard suggests that the extension of consumption of a drug is not determined by the severity of the laws, but by the effects a certain drug causes (50). Hence, if a drug has proven to be harmless (marijuana for instance, which was therefore called dope), a growth in consumption will occur, regardless of the potential laws which prohibit the usage. In contrast, in case that

users and those they are surrounded by see negative consequences of its consumption, it will decrease even with more permissive laws, as it happened with methedrine. The mentioned drug, when discovered by the hippies, was tried and its hazardous effects were witnessed, so it was soon generally rejected (ibid). This analogy probably explains the reason why the usage of heroin, cocaine, and other hard drugs have not spread in Haight-Asbury.

The motives behind the dope consumption were mostly of rebellious nature. Among other lifestyle aspects the hippies advocated, the fact that the mere pleasure of it was unacceptable to the most of the general public led to the countercultural revolt against the social restrictions which they aspired would grow into a social revolution. Dope was revolutionary, as Miller (American Values 5) affirms, because “the larger society, which had learned to tolerate some types of deviant behavior, was utterly overwhelmed by this new challenge.” Very soon indulging in dope turned into a cultural symbol in a way that it represented a breakaway from current social norms and limitations. It can be confirmed as Goodman relates the view expressed by one of the counterculturists: “People are taking drugs in repudiation of something – something most young people can see and understand, although we sometimes have a hard time defining it”.

In order to review the actual impact consumption of drug has had, by the mid-1970s there were numerous studies conducted in California regarding drug use among hippies. Lemke-Santangelo informs that the studies showed that “97% smoked marijuana and hashish, 91% consumed LSD, and 80% tried peyote and mescaline” (116). Apart from the other motives stated beforehand, one of the most encouraging ones was that the older generation condemned it, which only proved to the counterculture that dope usage must be morally righteous.

Meanwhile, despite being in agreement with the hippies ideology and bonded to them, there were some individuals and groups who entirely opposed both drugs and dope. Several reasons underlay the objection to its usage, but the most frequent was based on religion. As Miller remarks, one of the leaders of the resistance was Meher Baba, who supported the movement along with his followers (American Values 22). Hoffman indicated that Baba argued that drugs could not genuinely provide new insights in the ways religion was able to, adding that what they aid was obtaining delusional image of material reality, just as they boosted ego (11).

On the contrary, as Howard informs, a consumer affirmed that LSD leads to a “collapse of ego”, by which he referred to „a breakdown of the fears, anxieties, rationalizations, and phobias“ (49), issues that have prevented him from connecting with his nearest on a human level. The consumer also specifies sensing the life process in leaves, in flowers, in the earth, in

himself, inferring that the mentioned process “links all things, makes all things one” (ibid). Plenty of the members of the counterculture assured to have discovered by means of dope unexpected insights and sometimes an extensive philosophy of life. In the words of one of the users reported by Miller, drugs may be “related to the search for authentic human existence where a person is not alienated from himself and estranged from his fellow man” (American Values 5). Revelations of this sort are perhaps meeting with disapproval by the religion-related figures as they seem to be in conflict with their belief of God as the only mean to understand a complex philosophy of life, as a genuine link between individuals, as well as what connects them with other species.

#### **2.4. Rock Music Experience**

Along with the newly formed community in Haight-Ashbury emerged the musical scene. Ashbolt alleges that a number of dances were organized by a crew of managers called The Family Dog Collective, which also marked a crucial point in the development of the district’s as well as the San Francisco hippie scene (37). The type of music predominantly heard was rock music, which rose to prominence on the market. However, many bands tended to resist the commercialization and offered free performances around the city, such as those by some of the most famous bands, Jefferson Airplane and Grateful Dead (ibid). A common effort to keep a certain distance from the commercialist values of music visible in the industry in the biggest cities could be noticed among the bands in San Francisco, especially in the early countercultural period. The example was followed by other foci of the counterculture across country.

Miller claims that what distinguishes rock from other musical genres and has influence on its power, is its “most basic feature, the incessant rhythm, the driving 4/4 beat” (American Values 43). Such rhythm seemed to invite to dance, so its most loyal audience, the hippies, showed rock was physical, and sexual too. At concerts one could observe notable outfits and performances by both musicians and visitors. Most musical numbers contained vocal sections where lyrics conveyed the ideals and concerns of their audience. Still, many argue that the point the lyrics made was not a crucial aspect of a song. For instance, Murphy and Gross (206) affirm that

it really isn’t a very good idea to abstract rock lyrics from the accompanying music for isolated scrutiny. Rock is essentially an appeal to the gut sense of rhythm, intensely energy-releasing and sexual. In this respect rock magnifies the condition of all poetry.

For this reason, the music itself, as Reich claims (245), was seen as a fuel of the countercultural spirit and an important aspect of its lifestyle:

The rock experience at its most intense is an imitation of engulfment and merger, a route to a flowing, ego-transcending oneness. As fans and enemies alike know, rock sound overwhelms separateness, the mental operations that discern and define here and there, me and not me... Pounded by volume, riddled by light, the listener slides free from the restraining self and from the pretenses of a private 'unique' rationality.

The depiction above resembles the ones retold by several dope consumers, which goes to show dope and rock music should be observed as complementary aspects of the counterculture. According to Miller (*American Values* 44), the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper*, the fundamental album of psychedelic rock, rock music and dope could not be observed as separate entities. Even though it was agreed by the majority of musicians and people working in the industry that connection between music and dope must not be revealed to the general audience, some of them still admitted its relevance publicly. For instance, Hutton informs that Beatles drummer Ringo Starr affirmed that dope "made a lot of difference to the type of music and the words, providing new musical styles and new subject matter for lyrics."

Events which represented the culmination of rock music experience were outdoor festivals. Judging by its features such as enormous size and commune-like nature that opposed to law implementation which led to public resistance from the outside, they were not meant to last. Nonetheless, the energy generated by the musicians and the participants of the festivals was remarkable. Music was the principal motive of attendance, but the real purpose was the bond of the community. The peak festival in the countercultural era was certainly Woodstock, held over three days in the summer of 1969. And even though, as many other festivals, it lacked facilities and logistics, participants mostly expressed a feeling of satisfaction. Namely, Landau reports one of the participant's impression that "everyone needed other people's help, and everyone was ready to share what he had as many ways as it could be split up. Everyone could feel the good vibrations." In a way it represented cultural identity that was rarely seen as in those few days of shared musical experience. As Dankowski emphasizes, "The individual faded, and the crowd became an organism, something alive of itself" (16).

## **2.5. Youth Protests and Vietnam War Resistance**

During the decade of the 1960s, youth in the Western world symbolized a political and cultural impulse, reflected in tendency towards expressing their attitudes in the public



gatherings, towards consuming dope, burning their military identity cards, towards running away from home or quitting education. Youth culture and the counterculture's ideologies concurred and coexisted, broadening thereby the generation gap. Monteith suggests that the counterculture emerged during a period of economic stability, but at the same during a period of protest (7). The West enjoyed significant economical welfare; however, Duncan explains that "the hallowed Western concepts of rationalism, work, wealth, and civilization had misfired when they mixed with advanced capitalism and its technology to produce mind-numbing work" (145). Such a situation provoked disapproval among young people who despised money and their parents' pursuit of profitable careers both for themselves and their children, who cherished spiritual values instead.

For this reason, youth movement demanded changes since, as they claimed, leaders and governments of capitalist countries, as well as societies, were deeply unsatisfactory and corrupt. Most of the young people insisted that it was necessary to reject nationalism and advocate pacifism. Two kinds of protest could be distinguished, political and cultural, although Clara Juncker suggests that they can intertwine: "The personal is political and it was made political in literary texts that proved influential on both sides of the Atlantic in this period" (101). Namely, as Duncan argues, among European youth there had already existed a tradition of left-wing socialism based on the works of Marx and extended by the strong unions (157). Meanwhile, young people in the United States had only recently founded a powerful means to perform political activities called Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). A practice in which young people systematically engage in political protest (the one targeting institutions, laws and policies), was unprecedented in the United States (*ibid*). Stevens indicates that cultural protest, on the other hand, criticizes general values, consciousness, and prevailing postures (309). Yet, as already indicated, cultural protest can acquire characteristics and escalate into a political one.

As Duncan affirms, from the beginning of the 1960s there was an ongoing public conflict between the "violent realism of established structures and the utopian ideals of a peaceful global community" (157). According to Pruitt, on March 8, 1965, two corps of U.S. Army invaded the beaches of Da Nang, which marked the first official engagement of American forces in the Vietnam War. In the next few years, as the United States augmented its misfortunate involvement in the conflict, hundreds of thousands of Americans, prevailingly the youth, united in mass protests all over the country, disappointed and revolted by the vain bloody conflict that took place on the other side of the globe, in Southeast Asia. Although the peace activism had initiated with the gatherings and protests on university campuses at the beginning of the decade, increasing number of people came together in resistance to the war in the second

half of the 1960s. This was the case considering that media, especially television, offered images and footages of the barbarities of war into people's homes across the country providing distressing details (ibid). Such strike of reality prompted them to break the silence, gather as much participants on the streets, and demand withdrawal of the American soldiers from Vietnam.

Accordingly, it was not a coincidence that the direction of the hippie movement emerging in the mid-1960s concurred with the activities against the American involvement in the War. In other words, hippies saw political establishment and authority as well as obeying traditional social norms as the principal root of all society's flaws and issues, which included the war. As Rorabaugh states, hippies organized with political extremists in advocating the civil rights movement as well as vocalizing their opposition and challenging the purpose of recruiting American young forces for the Vietnam War.

While some of their efforts did not meet with success, like the one in the Washington march in October of 1967, Duncan observes that other attempts included placing flowers into the barrels of the rifles that were held by the soldiers who obstructed their paths (163). This act appeared to have evoked response given that the photograph later named "Flower Power" resounded and received positive acclaim worldwide.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

As those who felt they were part of the counterculture and aspired to initiate a change starting from themselves, the hippies decided to abandon their current lifestyle and ambience. Possibly the best opportunity to begin a new period in their lives was to join a community of like-minded individuals and contribute in improving it and promoting its philosophy. In each of the films we will analyze, we encounter one of the types of communities their members chose to be a part of. We will explain their role in the community, reasons to join it, their beliefs and habits. According to Conover (458), there are three types of communities that might appear the same at first; however, certain economic properties differentiate them.

Communes, on the one hand, are based on melded economies of both income and expenses, whereby the members usually own only minor items. On the other hand, intentional communities operate following the model of dual economy. This means that significant share of income and expenses is oriented to both common and separate purposes. Despite the fact that communes and intentional communities evidently function as households rather than as families, they imply socialization, identity, and emotional connection much as an ordinary family does. The remaining type represents a distinguished sort of community, a collective. Its members are not engaged in any kind of business apart from sharing between themselves restricted living costs, food, etc. Although collectives' involvement tends to be only temporary and is usually not recognized by a certain identity, they can be a departing point for larger communal engagement.

Additionally, Schwartz divided communes according to their aim (22):

- 1) Therapeutic communes were those intended for the communicating and resolving of either a psychological problem a member carried, or social situations that caused negative emotions, for instance a woman coping with sexism or young runaways attempting to solve their issues.
- 2) Fraternal communes included lonely individuals who simply longed for a life with people who shared similar attitudes.
- 3) Utopian communes were organized to demonstrate to the world an improved way of living, and to showcase the superiority of the unordinary lifestyle.
- 4) Organizing communes entailed those which had a determined ideology, or strategy to incite social changes, such as communes joined by opposition to the war in Vietnam or generally to the governing policies and norms.

In relation to communal life, we will deal with a negative example of individualism, as well as with an admirable example of collectivism. Namely, society claimed there was a paradox in countercultural relatedness to communes while at the same time promoting anarchy, independence, and individualism. The counterculture, however, never glorified individualism, especially if it in fact signified a front for individualism of constrained kind actually called selfishness (Miller, *American Values* 83). This character trait made people indifferent or hostile towards others, it made them neglect their environment, and caused social problems. Sacrificing individualism was a requisite for a successful and fulfilling life in a tolerable community. On the other hand, the negative effects of individualism included unhealthy competition, egoism, jealousy, and territorial claims (Slater 149). For that reason, the counterculture was, on the contrary, aware of the importance of collectivism, which implied suppressing one's self-gain for the benefit of the whole community.

According to Howard, due to the lack of opportunities to accomplish higher-class goals, lower-class youth turned to different ways of illegal behavior (52). He defines two types of deviance, both of which will be exemplified and argued in our analysis. Vertical deviance takes place when a person from a subordinate social or age rank pretends to enjoy the benefits of those in a superior rank (*ibid*). For instance, a fourteen-year-old who attempts to drive a car in spite of being underage and therefore unable to obtain a license. On the other hand, lateral deviance represents a case of persons of a subordinate rank determining their own values and norms that are opposed to established ones respected by people of a superior rank. An example of lateral deviance can be a teenager who smokes a more harmful marijuana rather than tobacco, or a seventeen-year-old girl who decides to escape from her family home in order to live in a commune.

Furthermore, provided that the countercultural youth represents the participants of a separate entity they live in, we discuss their habits and actions that have become a part of their lifestyle and ideology, such as engaging in open relationships, and how it affects persons from the outside. Their clothing and hairstyle reflect their ideology as well, hence we describe the messages they thereby intend to convey, and on the other side, the mainstream society's perception of their appearance. The counterculture also suffers discrimination which is thoroughly tackled in *Easy Rider*, a film that emphasizes differences in resident's attitudes toward the uncommon. On the other hand, *Hair* celebrates the opposition to any kind of discrimination, and promotes tolerance. As capitalism and Vietnam War are among the most immoral policies according to the counterculture, we observe how filmmakers incorporate protagonists' fight against these concepts in the films' narrative. In addition, we argue how

history of cinema is honored in *Easy Rider* by numerous references to the Western genre. Filmmakers' perspective on the experience of characters' drugs consumption will also be described, as well as the cinematographic techniques they utilize in order to transmit the vastness, magic, and liberating effect of the American landscape.

All of the movies are accompanied by rock music, which, according to Hill, rose to prominence and became "a sophisticated complement to film narrative" (9). Nonetheless, it serves a distinct purpose in each of the films. Namely, in *Easy Rider* contemporary rock songs follow the story, protagonists' actions and their movement to a new setting which brings different mood. *Wanderlust*'s rock tunes are destined for the same objective; however, they reminisce the past times that are brought to life by the characters' lifestyle. On the other hand, musical numbers in *Hair* serve for direct protagonists' portrayal as well as for storytelling.

## 4. ANALYSIS

### 4.1. *Easy Rider* (1969)

Unlike many films from the past, however, *Easy Rider* didn't have to wait for retrospective canonization. It was literally a legend in its own time, serving as an instant emblem of its generation. Besides the audience reception, critics from the alternative and mainstream presses alike generally saw it as a spectacular document of its times that effectively represented the hippie ethos as well as the serious rifts between counter- and dominant cultures. (Klinger 179)

*Easy Rider* engulfed plenty of widely-known properties of 1960s youth culture, and in particular counterculture which indicated it was destined to become immortalized and celebrated by those who could closely relate to the issues it tackles. Placing focus on hippie lifestyle and its social questions of freedom and repression complemented with the incorporation of rock music, it became a symbolic representation of counterculture's "libidinous pleasure, spontaneity, rebellion and aesthetic hipness" (ibid 180).

According to the movie genre division, *Easy Rider* qualifies in the category of the road movie genre. Following the definition by Dargis, the road entails "the space between town and country. It is an empty expanse, a *tabula rasa*, the last true frontier" (16). The impact of *Easy Rider* deviated the direction of road movies' history to a significant extent. Namely, despite the fact that the road in films has served as an alternative area which functioned as isolation space, a possibility to search for a shift from the mainstream society and dedicate to oneself; Cohan and Hark claim that most of the road movies produced prior to the 1960s conveyed traveler's eventual settlement and reintegration into the dominant society (5). *Easy Rider*, on the other hand, focuses on the adventure of two hippies, Wyatt (Captain America) and Billy, embodied by Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper, respectively, who travel on their motorbikes from Los Angeles to Mardi Gras festival in New Orleans only to meet an overwhelming antagonism from local residents on their route.

#### 4.1.1. Background and Origin

While resting in a Toronto hotel room after the promotion of his most recent film *The Trip*, directed by Roger Corman, among movie advertisements Fonda noticed a photo from another Corman's film. The photo was a publicity shot for the film called *Wild Angels* (1966) and it depicted Corman and Bruce Dern in front of motorcycles, which, as Hill informs, immediately created a vision of modern cowboys in Fonda's mind (11). However, instead of cowboys, he saw two friends traveling across country on their bikes looking for freedom on the

road, an idea for a potentially successful movie. Shortly afterwards, he recounted the idea to his *The Trip* co-star, Dennis Hopper.

Although the two of them were working within the Hollywood studio system, they also shared concerns and beliefs of the counterculture. They believed their careers came to be repressed by the studios' contemporary expectations concerning the appearance of young actors. Due to the fact that they let their hair grow longer, filmmakers decided they were almost only fitting for supporting roles of outcasts or villains (ibid).

Furthermore, Seitz indicates that Hopper was described as a person with strong, trouble-making character who argued with directors, which sometimes led to film production being slowed down and resulted in costs. Fonda, on the other hand, aspired to step out of his father's shadow. He did not want to engage in heroic protagonist roles which characterized Henry Fonda. Peter also leaned towards the political left, and disapproved of generic leading roles. He had an unhappy childhood with his father mistreating him and his mother committing suicide (ibid). Therefore, in creating their own picture, both Fonda and Hopper saw an opportunity to dismiss unfavorable influences.

#### **4.1.2. Intertextuality**

According to Klinger (180), one of the inspirations for Hopper's and Honda's motives was Beat writer Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road* (1957). The novel idealized the traveling adventure across country by uncommitted male individuals as an opposite pole to mainstream society's conformity. To be specific, *Easy Rider* quotes Kerouac's novel in various occasions, the most prominent probably being the one in which a commune resident asks Wyatt whether he would like to settle down there, claiming that he will exhaust his time (ibid 200). He replies that he is concerned about time, but still "just gotta go", meaning that, in spite of his awareness of temporality, he is restless and unable to commit. The movie also contains a whorehouse scene as a climax for its traveling protagonists, but instead of the hallucination caused by alcohol in Kerouac's *On the Road* scene (286), *Easy Rider*'s characters consume another substance, LSD.

Moreover, while both the movie and the book, as Klinger holds, honor "the West, the mystique of the individuality, and the awe-inspiring value of the US landscape" (200), *Easy Rider* lowers *On the Road*'s level of enthusiasm, disputing the potential of the road to lead to an adventure, new opportunities, and freedom.

### 4.1.3. Evoking the Western

Just as the whole movie genre celebrated the West, *Easy Rider* is filled with the Western references. The first image that comes to mind is that of Monument Valley along with Southwestern desolated wilderness. Additionally, Klinger recalls that protagonists' names, Wyatt and Billy, also reference famous Western heroes, Wyatt Earp and Billy the Kid, the former also being the leading role from *My Darling Clementine* (1946) played by Fonda's father (200).

Due to its frequent depiction in the Western, the idea of the wilderness has become a part of US history as its patriotic symbol. The campfire images from *Easy Rider* evoke similar ones from the Western (ibid 190). As they are banned from staying in motels, Wyatt, Billy, the hitch-hiker they bring along, and George spend the night in the open like the Western protagonists used to do. More specifically, Billy draws a direct parallel as he hears some animal noises and jokes that they are "out here in the wilderness fighting Indians and cowboys on every side."

Furthermore, Fonda and Hopper modernize the traditional practices by correlating the elements of the Old and New West (ibid). For instance, the director contrasts Billy's deerskin clothing with Wyatt's leather jacket, as well as horses with motorcycles. The latter concept is particularly accented when the farmer asks them to turn the motor off because the noise frightens the horse, and in the subsequent scene of the repair of Wyatt's motorcycle, which is opposed to shoeing the horse.

*Easy Rider* also inversed one of the most distinguished conventions of the genre, the movement from east to west, which earlier, as well as nowadays, symbolized liberty and progress for everyone (ibid). In the film, nonetheless, the protagonists decide to take a route from California to the Southeast, where they encounter animosity and rejection, which led to them being murdered by Southern local inhabitants.

### 4.1.4. Regional Differences

Along their journey, the protagonists meet with different reception and acceptance in two distinct geographical regions. To be more precise, the most glorified area in the movie is the Southwest, which, as Klinger suggests, once belonged to the peoples worshipped by the counterculture such as Native American peoples or Hispanics (183). The visual proof for that is hippie clothing and lifestyle that imitated the naturalism of the first settlers.



#### **4.1.4.1. Southwestern Commune**

On top of that, a hippie commune where Wyatt and Billy take a short rest is located in the Southwest. According to Hill, the members tend to receive all the visitors without fear or prejudice (46), especially if they are residents' acquaintances. In accordance with the common communal practice, two of the girls looked as they are willing to indulge into free love with the newcomers. While some of the residents are blood relatives, others seem to be individuals, "city kids" who arrived at the commune in search of inner peace and personal accomplishment which will at once serve the fraternal commune's collective. Nevertheless, work division appears to follow the predetermined gender roles (ibid). Precisely, women do the cooking and the household chores, while men are engaged in agricultural activities. Even though the success of the harvest will depend on various factors, especially the rain, their willingness is praiseworthy. While Billy is skeptical about the outcome, Wyatt, as Phipps affirms, is optimistic and recognizes their efforts as he sees dreamers in those young men. He can identify with their aspirations, even though he chooses a different path. Overall, in this region the protagonists enjoy a liberation provided by the road, cordiality of the people they encounter, and the charm of the isolated nature.

#### **4.1.4.2. Hostile South**

On the other hand, the Southern region, especially the small town setting, is portrayed as hostile and adverse. It is depicted as region whose inhabitants in the 1960s tended to be ignorant, intolerant, racist, and even violent. As Klinger depicts it, the South is historically involved in many politics-related issues: "It was the land of George Wallace, white separatist governor of Alabama, and the site of bitter and deadly Civil Rights struggles since the 1950s." Besides, its hostility is also sung about in Merle Haggard's country song "Okie from Muskogee" (1969) which takes pride in having conservative attitudes: "We don't let our hair grow long and shaggy" (183).

For all these reasons, it does not come as a surprise that precisely in the South Wyatt and Billy are openly discriminated, rejected, and harassed. They are imprisoned due to their long hair, loudly insulted at a local restaurant ("I thought at first that bunch over there... their mothers had maybe been frightened by a bunch of gorillas... but now I think they were caught"), assaulted in their sleep in the open, and ultimately killed by a truck driver on the road.

Billy believes that rejection they encounter is provoked by their appearance, but George Hanson, Civil Rights lawyer who is inclined to countercultural lifestyle and beliefs, explains

that the motives of mainstream society's disapproval are of different nature. He holds that those who deny conformity and ordinary lifestyle in fact oppose their traditional concepts of freedom in materialistic gain-oriented society: "They gonna talk to you about individual freedom. But they see a free individual, it's gonna scare 'em. But it don't make 'em running scared. It makes 'em dangerous." From George's statement it appears as though he predicted his own tragic fate.

#### **4.1.5. Landscape, Cinematography, and Rock Music**

The principal goal of the cinematography of *Easy Rider* is to put in spotlight the United States landscape. As Reed depicts it, the movie "looks like a nature study filmed on an opium trip" (233). According to Brode, the film focuses on picturesque road montages, designated as "travelogue" pieces, which allow viewers to "experience the vastness of America's physical beauty" (20). *Easy Rider's* enthusiastic portrait of the natural landscape is additionally reinforced, as Klinger alleges, by cinematic strategies that accentuate the protagonists' experience of the scenery via the usage of traveling point-of-view shots (188). By deploying such shots which are complemented by stimulating rock musical numbers, the filmmakers enhance the viewers' experience in a way that they can identify with the characters.

There are various sequences in the movie that idealize the American landscape by means of a vivid road editing. One of those sequences transmit the joy of riding by shots of the two protagonists on their motorbikes, shown just before the panoramic point-of-view shots of the desolated Southwest (ibid). The shots are accompanied by Steppenwolf's "Born to Be Wild", commonly named the bikers' hymn which reflects the rebelliousness and longing for adventure. As Rivadavia remarks, "It persists as the ultimate soundtrack for racing down life's highway atop two wheels."

After a meal with a farmer and his Mexican family, cinematographer Laszlo Kovacs provides extended images of Southwestern scenery which features the Rocky Mountains, woods, and deserts, culminating with protagonists' arrival in Monument Valley in sunset. Klinger observes that the sequences change from objective shots of the travelers on their motorcycles to subjective shots of their own perception of the landscapes they are passing through (189). This series of shots is followed by Byrds' "Ballad of Easy Rider" and The Band's "The Weight". As Klinger claims, "The combinations of road montage and musical passage act as interludes between narrative actions" (ibid). These means suggest the audience that they can absorb the beauties of the audio-visual experience: motorcycles, endless road, and intact nature. Hill states that it was also affirmed by the filmmakers that a great part of the cinematography intended to offer a sensation of "visual rather than verbal" (26).

Another cinematic method aids in representing the American wilderness. Precisely, in the aforementioned editing sequence, Klinger notices a nearly “360-degree pan of the horizon at Monument Valley” (189), whose intention is to provide a complete panoramic effect which this location of great significance for filmmaking history deserves. In these montages, the cinematographer lets the sunlight hit the camera lens, resulting in shots containing reflections and displaying occasional rainbow effects, which is a novelty introduced during the era of New American Cinema (ibid). This technique is also utilized to imply intensified sensations experienced by the protagonists as an effect of marijuana consumption. Additional method to symbolize its effects, as well as a change of scenery, is multiple quick shot alternation between two different settings, the current one and the one the protagonists are heading to afterwards.

#### **4.1.6. Urban Setting: Feeling of Desolation**

When Wyatt and Billy finally arrive in New Orleans, the depiction of the city intensifies the feeling of disconnection from the wilderness, which to them supposes alienation from the self. The road is replaced by a foreign city and its graveyard, where the protagonists consume LSD with a couple of prostitutes. In the trip sequence, the LSD represents disappointment and denial; however, Hill maintains that, as the effects intensify, it fails to offer serenity or enlightenment (50). Just on the contrary, it incites revelations deriving from unpleasant memories related to each of the character’s sense of alienation, loss or failure. One of the scenes of the turmoil is inspired by a real event, Fonda’s mother’s suicide. In spite of being a distressing sight, the director Hopper persuades him to shoot the scene in which he addresses his mother for the sake of authenticity (ibid 22): “Why did you leave like that? [...] Everybody else, but not you.”

According to the editor, the hallucinatory sequence was the last one edited for the film. Him and the director decided to implement “abrupt, straight cuts to heighten the hyper-reality of a trip instead of the common usage of optical effects” (ibid 29). By choosing this technique, they vividly depicted to the viewers the disorder and confusion that dominated their minds.

#### **4.1.7. They “Blew It”?**

In the final campfire scene, the mood that prevailed was joyless. Although Billy claimed that they, having earned money and having experienced what they were hoping to, “have done it”, Wyatt replies that they rather “blew it.” As seen by Seitz, this statement symbolizes the decay of the counterculture, whose inconsistent movement resembled to others insomuch that

it began to vanish by itself once it increased its significance and influence, which made it impossible for the counterculture to achieve actual change. It can also be interpreted as a confession to self that one has relented and embraced the curse of the capitalism. Such inference follows from Billy's words who in fact does not realize that the real purpose of the journey, the spiritual one, has not been accomplished.

As the protagonists embark on the last part of their journey, they ride alongside two local residents in the truck. Lack of tolerance towards Wyatt and Billy, who are obviously, according to them, unacceptably rebellious, prompts the truck driver to "scare the hell out of 'em." He eventually shoots Billy, and when Wyatt turns around and stops at the side of the road to provide him help, the shotgun hits Wyatt's motorcycle which subsequently explodes. Klinger emphasizes that in that instance an aerial shot captures the wreckage from the perspective of the landscape to convey the volume of the tragedy, which is even more enhanced by Roger McGuinn's rendition of Bob Dylan's song "It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)" (193).

According to Seitz, the final shot, in which camera rises above from Wyatt's burning motorcycle, may allude to his soul ascending to heaven. Although based on many interpretations, such as the one that the shot suggests the death of a man, or of a dream of revolutionary change; it may also imply the end of conformism. Billy's and Wyatt's character is rebellious, and such is the way they finished their lives in the wilderness as "Ballad of Easy Rider", which celebrates freedom, resounds simultaneously.

#### **4.2. *Hair* (1979)**

Upon meeting lyricists Gerome Ragni and James Rado, Galt MacDermot began setting their writings to music and the trio eventually created *Hair*, which opened off-Broadway in 1967 and moved to the Great White Way the next year. He paired the duo's cosmic ruminations on the Age of Aquarius with a soulful rocking groove and provided scratchy rock guitars to "The Flesh Failures (Let the Sunshine In)". The song was released in 1969 by The Fifth Dimension as part of a medley with "Age of Aquarius", quickly establishing the song as an anthem for the hippie generation. (Grow)

A decade after the widely acclaimed Broadway success, the counterculture-celebrating musical *Hair* was transferred to the silver screen guided by the vision of the director Milos Forman and screenwriter Michael Weller. By choosing to modify the well-known stage version, they decided to incorporate a story that would, according to Canby, see characters develop in time and space, as opposed to them expressing themselves almost exclusively through musical numbers. Still, it is the songs that provide the insight in the mind and personality of the characters, which thereby contribute in constructing the narrative as well.

#### 4.2.1. Youth of Aquarius

As the principal protagonist arrives in New York ahead of military training and thereafter departing for Vietnam, he encounters a group of young people in Central Park. They appear to be immersed in dancing to the number called “Aquarius”, which is symbolically related to his arrival and implies a turning point in his life. Skidmore suggests that in astrology, the beginning of the Age of Aquarius entails a mystical moment of a period change which some people believed took place in the late 1960s. In the words of Reid (98), astrologers hold that it is the time when

humanity takes control of the Earth and its own destiny as its rightful heritage, with the destiny of humanity being the revelation of truth and the expansion of consciousness, and that some people will experience mental enlightenment in advance of others and therefore be recognized as the new leaders in the world.

The lyrics attempt to convey yearning for idealism the new era brings, hope for a better world and for dispelling misdeeds frequently done by humans: “Harmony and understanding/ sympathy and trust abounding / no more falsehoods or derisions / golden living dreams of visions / mystic crystal revelation / and the mind’s true liberation.” The number consequently inspires a peculiar dance that comes as a result of both choreographer Tharp’s and director Forman’s work, who, according to Meisel (7), “casts Tharp’s dances in a kinetic variant on the way he casts actors”, in order to emphasize the individuality of each of the dancers, and aspirations of the human spirit.

Among the colorful crowd, a specially connected group can be distinguished. We can observe the four of them live in the park as a collective. Following Conover’s classification, we notice that, unlike members of the communes and intentional communities, the group does not adhere to any structural organization or economic commitment (458). As a matter of fact, they are not bound to any working responsibility, and do not share a common dwelling. For that reason, even though their mutual affection is not based on blood relationship, the group can be depicted as a free-living family rather than a household. However, they socialize with the crowd of like-minded youth who frequent the park and who might have had influence on their lifestyle, or vice-versa.

The group lives in material deprivation and is compelled to ask passers-by for some spare money. Namely, just as the protagonist Claude, Jeannie comes from a rural part of the country, Kansas. On the other hand, it can be presumed Berger abandoned his parents’ home as we see his mother putting pressure on him by comparing him to one of his friends drawing his

attention to the accomplishments of the latter. In order to tell their background stories in a cheerful way, the larger crowd of fellow hippies joins them. Together they ironically celebrate their, for most of them, self-imposed lifestyle and deprivation of material possessions even if those suppose basic home utensils or clothes. Still, they take pride in their pacifism, opposition to military draft, and country's war policy in general: "Ain't got no knife / Ain't got no guns / Ain't got no garbage / Ain't got no draft card."

#### **4.2.2. Engaging in Vertical and Lateral Deviance**

Group's unfavorable social status and lack of formal wear causes them to attract adverse attention at Sheila's debutante party which they attend uninvited. By indulging in this deprecatory endeavor, the group in fact engages in vertical deviance, a notion explained by Howard (52). Namely, they do not belong to the high-profile social class, and hence cannot enjoy its perquisites. If viewed initially as low-lives, from the moment Berger insists to deliver a speech at the head of the table refusing to leave when asked, they become pests that need to be disposed of. However, Berger persists in his intention to provide his newly made friend an opportunity to enjoy the presence of a girl he has become fond of. When being accused by an invitee of "having a hell of a nerve", he performs an act that can be classified as lateral deviance, given that it suggests an action which opposes superior class' norms (ibid). To be precise, Berger performs table dancing, which implies a certain material damage. On top of that, as a reply to the invitee and the rest of the socialite, he sings a meaningful number which displays his character and ideology, because, according to Meisel (7), "how people act in public is the most meaningful reflection of their character." The song emphasizes his perception of freedom; satisfaction with his life, gratefulness for his health, and for being able to have fun, even though he is not one of them. It also represents an antipode to the number "Ain't Got No."

On the outside, Sheila, the girl Claude is in love with, appears to be one of them, that is, a prototypical member of the higher social class. In reality, not only do we see her furtively smoke marijuana with her friends of the same social origin, but we also notice her observing Berger's party crashing benevolently, even in awe at times. As reported by Bennetts, the actress who embodies Sheila can relate to her latent rebelliousness on a personal level: "Only 15 years old in 1968, the year the movie was set in, Miss D'Angelo ran away from home in Columbus, Ohio, at 17 to join a commune in California." Such clues indicate that Sheila potentially shares beliefs with the group of party invaders.

### **4.2.3. Priority to Collectivism over Individualism**

The group eventually faces the court conviction. They are sentenced to either workhouse for 30 days or paying a \$50 fine. However, each one of them is penniless except for Claude who has been given exactly \$50 by his father in case of trouble. He proceeds to the clerk's office to pay his fine, giving the rest a promise he will "make some calls." Nonetheless, Berger manages to convince him to put the ego aside and to concede the money to him as he is familiar with the area and with the people unlike Claude, who showcases an excellent example of sacrificing individual benefit in favor of the collective gain. Namely, as Miller suggests, in a world where people are mostly oriented towards the self-survival, it is important to point to an individual that sometimes he is not able to proceed favorably by himself (American Values 84). In this way Claude proved his commitment to the group is ahead of his self-gain.

The same devotion is displayed by Berger, who asks his parents the total of \$250 in order for everyone to be released. He is willing to sacrifice his long curly hair, which constitutes a part of the character and ideology of a hippie, and have it cut to please his mother and satisfy her requirement. That intention of his goes to show he is subordinating his priorities to the ones of the group.

### **4.2.4. Hair as Ideology Statement**

While still in detention, Woof persistently resists the regulation that suggests male hair in prison ought to be cut short. His opposition leads to the psychiatrist's question whether he is attracted to the same sex, which reflects the common inference of the popular belief of the era. After receiving a negative answer, the psychiatrist remains doubtful about his motives of resistance. Along with others, Woof replies through a musical number that, besides involving ironizing lyrics about its purpose, celebrates hair in all forms: "I want it long, straight, curly, fuzzy, greasy, shining, gleaming, streaming." As many hippies promoted unisex appearance, longer hair was, as Skidmore depicts, one of the elements that illustrated the equality of genders: "It symbolized not only rebellion but also new possibilities, conveyed the message of rejection of discrimination and restrictive gender roles." In the period when young male population was sent to fight in a war, an action that could have been avoided, the prominence of long hair was, in the words of Skidmore, a "stamp of pacifism", as well as a form of a peaceful protest against such policy. The scene where the group, particularly Sheila loosening her tight bun, lets their hair wave freely in the wind while driving across country to Nevada to visit Claude in the army base symbolizes free spirit and an anti-war motif.

#### **4.2.5. Less Discrimination, More Love**

In the same way that the group, and the counterculture in general, promotes gender equality, they set an example in advocating equality of races as well. This idea is perfectly manifested by means of the musical number “Black Boys, White Boys”, which contains, as Auster remarks, “the mischievously lascivious lyrics with a blend of miscegenation and homoeroticism” (56). To be precise, two distinct groups perform the song. One of those consists of three white girls singing the “ode” to colored young men, and the other is made of three black girls celebrating white young men, both groups thereby comparing them lustfully with different kinds of delicious food. Not only do the girls verbalize they are fond of the guys regardless of their skin color, but we also notice officers at the army induction observing and singing along. Suid (360) holds that the scene is presented in a gentle and humorous way that should not offend anyone, as its intention is to transmit antimilitary message and disapprove of both sexual and racial discrimination.

A convenient example of rejecting discrimination and embracing free love instead is Jeannie, a pregnant girl from the group who is not certain about who the father of her baby is. As the most female members of the counterculture believe, open relationships carry sexual liberation, considering the restrictions the society imposes. When affirming she is not “into heavy preference trip”, she means she cherishes both men, implying that moralizing about the issue is pointless, given that there may arise globally more important concerns that need to be dealt with: “Well, I admit that I have this dilemma. But it will be resolved real soon. It’s not like a big crisis or anything. It’s not like a world war.”

#### **4.2.6. Be-In Gathering: Colorful Style, Rock, LSD**

After being released from detention, a great opportunity for the group to taste liberty again is the ongoing anti-war gathering in Central Park. With a large crowd and a rock band, it seems a lot like 1966 Trips festival or one of the Be-Ins that followed. In order to assemble a crowd that big, the production of the movie distributed advertisements inviting people to a gathering that will provide entertainment by engaging a rock band. Therefore, the crowd could enjoy the rhythm of “Old Fashioned Melody/Electric Blues”, a number in which, in the words of Horn, “old-fashioned melody merges into the full rock sound” (74). The song celebrates the current era of electric sounds, claiming that the past melodies are now seen as old-fashioned. Additionally, Goodwin informs that it was promised that the director Forman will “prominently feature those in the crowd who are in the appropriate garb, that is, in the costume of a flower



child.” The result exceeded the expectations, and consequently we can observe a successful imitation of the typical counterculture outfits and accessories. As Camp describes the gathered crowd,

they came in work clothes, frizzed hair and Frisbees draped in ponchos, wearing blue jeans and boots. There were feathers, beads, and flowers everywhere – daisies in their hair, daffodils in their buttonholes, and tulips in their hands and headbands.

Goodwin alleges that plenty of people also brought peace signs, Viet Cong as well as American flags, even the popular slogan “Make Love, Not War” was noticed in the crowd. Such response by the people demonstrate that, even with the ten-year time lag, most of them respect and share countercultural values that youth like Claude’s friends promotes, which are anti-materialism, naturalism, and pacifism.

Being the integrated member of the group, Claude follows their example and, along with other youth, indulges into a collective LSD experience. His trip, as Meisel observes, illustrates the collision of three different worlds that are merging together at this point of his life: his conservative rustic upbringing originating from a religious setting, Sheila’s high-class surroundings, and free-living hippie family (7). Precisely, Claude attends what it seems to be a typical wedding between Sheila and himself in a metaphysical way. However, we observe the liturgist levitating, and Sheila becoming pregnant after the first marital kiss, rising in the air and flying around. Such images coincide with some of the explanations regarding effects that LSD consumption has. Gelberg, for instance, points that “for many, LSD had served as a kind of sacrament, a magic portal to extraordinary experiences, profound insights, and extraordinary spiritual emotions.” Ironically, the sequence is accompanied by the “Hare Krishna” song, which is the denomination of the spiritual movement that, as Gelberg affirms, opposed the drug consumption. The next moment we see Claude riding a horse passing by the luxurious table with Sheila’s invitees, and wearing the same formal clothes as they do. In other words, by the means of the mind-altering substance, Claude is able to experience emotions that he yearned for but that seemed unattainable. On the other hand, there is Berger on the top of the table dancing around while a musical number plays, reminding him of the reality he is closest to, and the one he is, in fact, a part of, as his trip comes to an end: “Beads, flowers, freedom, happiness!”

A change of mood often supposes a change of scenery, for which Forman and the cinematographer Ondricek make use of light, that is, of parts of the day as well as the weather. On the one hand, light serves them to accentuate the park’s beauty and captivating spirit, and on the other, the cloudy weather illustrates the reality that strikes Claude by waking up in the

open after a vivid night of dancing, singing, and smoking marijuana. As Auster describes it, “At one moment Forman captures the euphoria of sunlight coming through trees and leaves and, in the next, the ominousness of clouds casting early morning shadows on puddles” (55). During his LSD-caused hangover, Claude wanders around the park where the night gives the lake “an inky black purity” (ibid). He goes for a swim with the rest of the group, which can be seen as Claude’s purification and sobering from the dope he has consumed.

#### **4.2.7. Vanity of the Vietnam War**

As the group’s last night together in the eve of Claude’s departure to Nevada for this military training before being shipped to Vietnam is coming to an end, they eventually have a fallout over reasons Claude is going into war, which is one of the principal questions the movie tackles. Claude affirms he accepts to go for the sake of all of the male members of the group since, according to the country’s imperialistic policy, they are all supposed to head to the battleground. As it is summarized at the earlier gathering, “The draft is white people sending black people to make war on the yellow people to defend land they stole from the red people!”

The matter, as Young declares, is particularly familiar to the director given that while he was younger, his country Czechoslovakia was under both Nazi and Communist occupation. He reveals that in the scenes of infantry training the production was conceded permission for the cooperation with the Army. In accordance with his attitude, as Arnold indicates, it is more effective to have people who are not actors but are in their natural ambience performing what they do in real life. The scene is accompanied by the song “Three-Five-Zero-Zero”, which is Claude’s draft number. The lyrics transmit the brutal reality of the Vietnam War depicting, as Bullimore remarks,

the capture of poorly armed and often barefooted Vietnamese liberation fighters by the better armed, but nonetheless scared US draftees, the song describes combatants “ripped open by metal explosions” in “this dirty little war.”

It implies the War can only bring losses without any particular benefit to both conflicting sides. The actor embodying Claude, John Savage, shares a similar atrocious experience which enabled him to relate to the training sequence: “It was my life. It was what I had all around me. Friends that were being shot at home for demonstrating. It was disturbing.” Moreover, the screenwriter Michael Weller considered essential for the movie the idea of contrasting the idealistic hippie

lifestyle on the one hand, and the realistic world of military training on the other. As Suid reports (364), Weller sees the film as

very liberating, colorful and exultant, and then suddenly you are showing grim, regimented, gray and sort of horrible repressive behavior that's being imposed on Claude, and then you move in on his face and you get a sense of what he is experiencing.

In the final scene we witness Berger who, after sacrificing himself for his friend Claude, is mistakenly being shipped overseas as the base receives a premature and unexpected alert notification. As informed by Young, the actor Treat Williams can identify with that fear and uncertainty to some extent looking back on the night when he was among the potential draftees: "I remember sitting at my parents' kitchen table by myself with a six-pack of beer, and my number came up, 347, so I didn't have to go. I was terrified that night."

However, even though their friend and guide is no longer with them, the group gathered at his grave sings a song which, according to Suid, conveys faith and hope rather than sorrow or resignation (360). To be more precise, they vocalize their aspiration to be engaged in standing up for changes and creating a better future just as the shot changes to the massive crowd in front of the White House participating in the same endeavor.

### **4.3. *Wanderlust* (2012)**

George and Linda smoke pot, dance, flirt, relax, and realize that maybe American society got it all wrong. Has our daily grind ever actually made someone happy? Not really! Living on a commune that encourages free love, intentional living, meditation and complete freedom of expression seems like a better deal. (Saxena)

The most recent film out of the analyzed three, even though it falls within the genre of comedy, leaves some of the critics and audience thinking about the style of life they are leading and their priorities. In this chapter we discuss properties of a new community, that is, an intentional commune that the protagonists encounter on their way to the other side of the country, compare those to their usual, conventional lifestyle and standards, and draw conclusion in regards to the writers' and director's posture on the aforementioned concepts.

#### **4.3.1. *Elysium* – an Intentional Community**

After their professional failures, George and Linda, a young yuppie couple, are compelled to sell their studio apartment and find a temporary shelter at George's brother's place in Atlanta. Along the way they decide to take a rest in northern Georgia in what appears to be

a bed & breakfast type of accommodation. Instead, they realize they are staying in a hippie commune, or to be more specific, as their leader affirms, they “prefer the term intentional community.” The former one is misleading, because, in his words, “when you hear the word commune, you think of a bunch of hippies sitting around, smoking pot and playing guitar”, which is, curiously enough, exactly what they do when relaxing.

Nonetheless, as Conover explains in his categorization, the form of their economic organization is indeed an intentional community as in Elysium they practice dual economy (458). Namely, a part of their rooms is destined to renting, and they are also involved in cultivating apple trees as well as picking and selling the fruits. On top of that, the community owns the land where they live which proves the deed dating back to 1971. This means they are not obliged to pay taxes for it; however, they are required to pay taxes for the mentioned business. The community members’ expenses also include supplies from the nearby town they occasionally go to.

Concerning the work division among sexes, there are some examples of work mutually done by both men and women, such as selling apples or milking cows, which Linda learnt from the community leader, Seth. On the other hand, we can notice a female member of the community was happy to make hummus for the rest of her fellow members. Moreover, even though George was conceded to perform the usual male farm work, as a city dweller he seemed to have problems handling it.

Additionally, as inferred from the classification provided by Schwartz, this intentional community can also be depicted as a combination of a therapeutic and utopian one (22). Concretely, its participants attempt to promote their unconventional way of life by introducing it to the outsiders, as well as they offer help in dealing with psychological issues to those newly arrived in the same way they provide support to each other. We will argue those statements below.

#### **4.3.2. Lifestyle and Ideology**

One important community’s custom is the circle of truth. It represents an opportunity for the members to vocalize their opinion on a current situation or personal relationship with the other member. Although it seemed strange and uncomfortable to them at the beginning, George and Linda discussed their issues with the help of the others who were provoking and chanting in order to make them speak freely: “Have at her, George. Hit her! Not with your hands. With words, with your truth.” We can presume that one of the members had undergone

such a process of finding her inner peace as she insinuated she had been working in the porn industry, suggesting it was not easy for her to tell her story with honesty either.

In order to make sure that participants relax completely, they are offered a mutual cup of tea as they “feel that sharing the tea is an extension of sharing [their] truths.” It in fact has hallucinogenic properties, as explained by Kathy, and is “like a stronger peyote.” The tea causes Linda to see things that are not real, that is, she experiences a trip. The director presents it, according to Failes, by adding colored artwork in motion which accompanies Linda who is running, and by accentuating the depth of the shot which produces a 3D scene and therefore makes the experience more realistic.

The head of the community is a man whom they see as their “teacher, guru, guide, coach, shaman”, and certainly not a leader, because, as he himself claims, “Mother Earth is our only leader.” In a special type of meditation he performs in the woods, he uses primal gesticulating to repel globally negative things such as war or habits society practices which do harm to both environment and society itself: “We’re choking the birds on our smoke! Detergents in the ocean!” Seth prompts George and Linda to join him, as it, according to him, helps you release your anxieties, tensions, and fears. We can also observe he does not use his position to claim any privilege as he assures he “lives wherever [he] is” at a certain moment, “takes [his] slumber” on the tree without seeking shelter in the case of rain: “I drink the nourishment that Gaia is feeding me through her cloud teats.”

Rooms of the house they spend part of their time and sleep in are not separated by doors because they think that “doors close [them] off from one another. We like to keep a nice, open flow in the house.” Not only do they spend time with a person on the toilet; they also allow domestic animals to roam around the house. In this way the house represents only an extension of their natural ambience, which is where they spend most of their time: working outdoors, having meals, working out, swimming, etc. The members of the community also share everything between themselves and solve problems that arise. As soon as George made a remark he liked one of his fellow member’s T-shirt, the guy took it off and offered it to George. What is more, all of the members joined their forces to upturn Linda and George’s upside-down car given that it rolled earlier as they were frightened and trying to escape from a nudist who was approaching them.

A nudist is not an extraordinary sexual phenomenon in the community whatsoever as they tend to practice open relationships as well. They share the posture that, according to the biology, “homo sapiens were not meant to be monogamous creatures.” Such attitude takes George and Linda by surprise but soon they decide that they accept another aspect of being

integrated into the community, and absorb the community's viewpoint: "As long as there's trust, and communication, and respect, we can all enjoy each other intimately." Practicing free love is one of the principal customs which reflect the community's divergence from social norms and values.

The community advocates freedom of expression by creating music as well. For instance, Seth composes a sexually explicit song inspired by Linda, which leaves her and her husband with a stunned expression on their faces, but to the other fellow members it is just a habit they are used to and listen to occasionally, as is the case with open relationships. The music they usually play on acoustic guitar when relaxing at night, smoking marijuana, and swimming in the pond is rock music with effluence of country and funk, as is mostly the case with the rest of the movie soundtrack. For instance, the director resorts to the Sly and The Family Stone's song "Underdog" for the hallucinatory scene in order to convey Linda's feelings after disburdening her mind and releasing her concerns which caused her to feel negative emotions.

As an aspect of their ideology, Elysium promotes the idea of a non-violent community. The members go so far as to avoid clapping, but, as Bradshaw suggests, "they rub their fingers and thumbs together instead, because clapping is too invasive and disempowering." They opt for such a way of showing appreciation or admiration as it is, according to their view, "less aggressive." Furthermore, in a scene where George swats a fly, he is accused of killing "a defenseless animal who might have had young living somewhere", and is labelled as having "a fetish for violence." Seth, as the teacher he presents himself to be, explains to him using a vicious circle metaphor, describing his act as a potential causal connection: "And where does it end? When you kill a fly, you kill a bird. You kill a bird, you kill a dog... You kill a dog, you kill a soldier." George defends himself saying he is overreacting, adding that he "supports the troops." Everyone is outraged after hearing this statement, which reflects the stance of their like-minded participants of the 1960s counterculture.

Another important value shared at Elysium is anti-materialism. Before the couple departed for George's brother's place, they proceeded to pay for their stay, but the members refused it, replying that they paid them "with [their] friendship and honesty, and [their] stories." In addition, they receive a goodbye gift from Karen. In her own words, those are "some sticks glued to orange peels", but she is convinced that it will remain a symbol of their time spent in the community: "I made this for you so that you'll always remember Elysium." Ultimately, the oldest member of the community remarks that "money buys nothing." George subtly disputes him adding that what he means includes the important things in life, but Carvin insists that "it

literally buys nothing.” This statement as a part of an ideology directly proves to be utopian since, as we already mentioned, the community still earns money needed for its subsistence.

#### **4.3.3. Protest against Capitalism**

In the same fashion as several decades ago, the Elysium inhabitants are prepared to oppose to actions that go against their beliefs, or in this case, against the land they unfortunately lost the deed to. As they were already informed, a major corporation has plans to build a casino on their property. “Where once stood an insignificant fruit stand will now grow the much sweeter fruit of prosperity. So here’s to good jobs, economic growth and tax revenue for years to come”, they announce, showcasing an example of expanded capitalistic policies both counterculture and Elysium intend to resist to. When the day eventually arrives, the community does not hesitate in coming together and confronting the excavators. The journalist who is reporting about the event is about to leave as she has gathered the information she needs, which incites Linda to an act that will draw viewers’ attention and raise consciousness about the issue that involves “a corporation making backroom deals with politicians so they can screw over another local business.” Namely, she removes the upper part of her clothes which results in showing her breasts, which subsequently caused agitation among all the people present and encouraged the fellow members of the community to follow her example. Carvin proudly inferred that such a performance marked the beginning of the revolution. Perhaps it is a premature conclusion, but it can be affirmed that such an act served the purpose as “the County Commissioner has stated that no construction will go forward until a full review of community impact.”

#### **4.3.4. Negative Individualism Case Uncovered**

At the climax of the picture, we observe the narrative shedding light on the reason behind Seth being acquainted with many technological devices he mentioned with irony: “You know, you can really get trapped in that web of beepers and Zenith televisions and Walkmans, floppy disks, laserdiscs, answering machines and Nintendo Power Glove.” Namely, he searches and manages to find the deed to the community, sells it furtively to the property developer for \$11,000 after which they burn it together. This act of his goes to show the actual face of his character conveyed through, as Miller considers it, an adverse type of individualism, or better yet, selfishness (American Values 83). To be specific, he disregards collective values and common land the community resides in, and gives priority to his ego to decide how to proceed.

What is more, in absence of George, who temporarily returned to his brother's home after a fight with Linda, Seth asks her to escape with him to Miami where he has recently purchased an apartment. After she rejects him and George returns, Seth's competitiveness and jealousy lead to a physical confrontation emerging from a man who up until that moment strongly opposed to violence.

#### **4.3.5. People's Perspective on the Community**

From a foreign point of view, many people consider the community and their endeavors should not be taken seriously. Ironic remarks can be heard even from a news presenter: "Maybe if they ever build this casino these hippies can win the jackpot and buy themselves some shirts." A similar viewpoint comes from George's aggressive racist brother as well, who sees the community as "hippie-dippies, with their B.O.<sup>1</sup> and their white dreads." His comments express his underestimating attitude towards the hippie style of life as less complex and unstructured, while he tries to impose on his brother his career-oriented perspective as the only possible, neglecting his wife in the meantime. Such a behavior incites George to return to his wife at the Elysium, and to turn a new page in their lives by starting a publishing company back in New York. An aftermath of that kind leads to a conclusion that the director and screenwriters still consider the hippie ideology and lifestyle to be marginal, unconventional, and even, as shown in many of the scenes, subject to mockery, the latter being the ultimate goal due to the genre of the film.

Nonetheless, some of the cast enjoyed indulging into a slower lifestyle during the shooting of the film in Clarkesville, Georgia. They fancied being surrounded by the nature and the people of the community only. As Quinn reports, Jennifer Aniston, who personifies Linda, stated that she "realized how walled [she] was in a way, not consciously so, but just this sort of protective armor that [she has]. It was really special to get back in touch with that part of myself and that sort of anonymity."

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<sup>1</sup> Body odor.



## 5. CONCLUSION

The hippie counterculture's ideological posture was benevolent, passionate and serious; however, a community as such could not be sustainable without the structural basis that enables societies to function undisturbedly for larger periods of time. The Diggers, an organized group which used to prepare and distribute meals to the countercultural community in Haight-Ashbury, began to leave the locus. In concrete, it lacked organization and members were no longer contributing to the common purpose. To put it shortly, the group ceased to function as a collective.

Similar circumstances occurred among the countercultural members who, as Tyler points, no longer reflected "shift in consciousness or a statement of any revolutionary attitudes", but only a change in superficial beliefs. Similarly, Howard affirms that "the hippies assumed that volunteerism (every man doing his thing) was compatible with satisfying essential group and individual needs, and with the maintenance of a social system" (47). The counterculture proved to be inconsistent with the aforementioned statements as they sensed deep inside that they were not able to continue to contribute to the community following its ideology, but were instead attracted to some mundane goods and philosophies.

When observing from the perspective of the protagonists from our movies, George and Linda of *Wanderlust* were partially willing to accept and even adapted to most of the community's habits, but they could not escape from their inner aspiration for a different way of self-realization which was closely related to the capitalist system. Moreover, *Easy Rider*'s Wyatt and Billy, even though in search of an idealized adrenaline-driven road-bound lifestyle that promises liberty, could not help succumbing to the joys of hedonism which distanced them from spiritual fulfillment. Finally, despite the fact that Claude from *Hair* managed very quickly to integrate into the group's collective and acquire their lifestyle, he had idealistic and moralistic posture about participating in war, or in other words, did not succeed in departing from his initial, traditional values originating from his rural environment.

Nevertheless, the two movies made at the end of 1960s and the 1970s, respectively, are still able to appeal to modern audiences due to their authenticity and to a certain extent an idealized dedication to the countercultural period. 2012's *Wanderlust* demonstrates that even nowadays some people are willing to attempt to indulge into the hippie kind of lifestyle, and others are able to share countercultural beliefs as they show dissatisfaction because they believe their country is heading into the wrong direction owing to the government's inadequate policies. Ultimately, plenty of adolescents can easily identify with these films for the fact that they, as Treat Williams claims in an interview reported by Young, address the issue of "kids finding

their strength and independence.” This is probably the reason that they are still relevant up to date.

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## **Peace, Love and Misunderstanding: Representation of Hippie Counterculture in Selected Films – Abstract and Key Words**

The tumultuous 1960s were a decade marked by the countercultural movement on social, political, and cultural level in terms of challenging the traditional social norms and mainstream attitudes. The influence of the counterculture can be observed in many of the popular art forms, such as literature, music and filmmaking, originating both back in the day and nowadays. For that reason, the present thesis aims to analyze different ways in which the filmmakers depict the lifestyle and ideology of the members of the counterculture, providing the viewpoint of the conventional society as well as their personal one. The principal focus is placed on the type of community the countercultural members live in, its structure and the position of the female members, the hazards of misusing one's entitlement to individualism within the community and the deviant acts of its members, the motives behind specific outfits, hairstyles, and drug consumption, as well as gatherings and protests caused by the social and political injustice. Being the crucial part of the moviemaking process, the thesis also deals with the cinematography along with the musical numbers that accompany it and reflect the spirit of the era.

Key words: hippie counterculture, 1960s, movement, community, commune, gender roles, feminism, individualism, collectivism, outfit, hairstyle, drug consumption, protests, Vietnam War, cinematography, rock music

## **Mir, ljubav i nerazumijevanje: Prikaz hipijevske kontrakulture u odabranim filmovima – Sažetak i ključne riječi**

Godine 1960-e bile su desetljeće previranja obilježeno kontrakulturalnim pokretom na društvenoj, političkoj i kulturalnoj razini na način da je osporavao tradicionalne društvene norme i dominantne stavove. Utjecaj kontrakulture vidljiv je u mnogim popularnim umjetničkim formama, kao što su književnost, glazba i film, nastalim u to doba i u današnje vrijeme. Iz tog je razloga svrha ovog rada analizirati različite načine na koje filmaši prikazuju stil života i ideologiju pripradnika kontrakulture, nudeći također stajalište konvencionalnog društva ali i njihovo vlastito. Rad se fokusira na vrstu zajednice u kojoj žive pripadnici kontrakulture, njezinu strukturu i položaj ženskih članova, štetnost zloupotrebe prava na individualizam unutar zajednice i devijantne postupke njezinih članova, motive koji stoje iza specifične odjeće, frizura i konzumacije droga, kao i okupljanja i prosvjede protiv društvenih i političkih nepravdi. Budući da je ona od iznimne važnosti u procesu stvaranja filma, rad se bavi i filmskom fotografijom uz koju se također vežu glazbeni brojevi čije melodije i stihovi dočaravaju duh tog razdoblja.

Ključne riječi: hipijevska kontrakultura, 1960-e, pokret, zajednica, komuna, rodne uloge, feminizam, individualizam, kolektivizam, odjeća, frizure, konzumacija droga, prosvjedi, Vijetnamski rat, filmska fotografija, rock glazba