

What was the role of the hippie in American culture?

Peace, love, and brotherhood were the call of the American hippie. The American hippie tried to live all three in unison in every part of the country. There were very few places where the hippie could not be found and even fewer that had never been influenced by the hippie movement. It seemed as if the hippies were becoming the new American culture, though it was only a subculture. The hippie movement influenced political, social, and traditional beliefs. The hippie movement was not a stationary force that had no influence; it was a broad subculture that forever changed the fabric of American culture and society.

The era of the hippie came out of an era of very conservative beliefs and attitudes concerning anything and all things from haircuts to politics to morals. The generation living in the late 1960's and early 1970's wanted to break away from the picture perfect image of their parents. They wanted to become more, gasp, natural by growing their hair long and admiring the beauty of the world around them. The hippies were a very esthetic group of individuals, delighting in those activities that were visually pleasing. This desire to see beauty in all things was heightened by an increase in drug use, specifically those drugs that had a hallucination quality, such as weed, LSD, and marijuana.

Increased drug use was only one of the many activities that they partook in that was not immediately applauded by the American culture. Many criticized and scorned hippies because of their loose morals and fixation with drugs.

Other activities that brought scorn upon the hippies was their promiscuity. Hippies were very comfortable with their sexuality and their bodies and were not afraid to share with others their experiences or partake in sexually experiences with others. Hippies believed that the body was a beautiful thing and should be used in a beautiful manner such as sex. This has stayed with society today. There are currently a lot of premarital sex occurring in society. This was not openly believed to be the case before the 1960's, but after the era of the hippies, the belief that sex was only for marriage could not be hidden any longer. Sex is no longer such a taboo subject as it was in the 1950's due in a large part to the hippie welcoming their sexual identities and desires as not something that should be kept locked away, but something to be explored.

The hippie was not only breaking away traditional conservative beliefs, they also contributed to society in a positive way. The hippies were a group of people who would come together, live together, and practice their life together. This life involved everyone getting a piece of whatever was available. They were very big into the share and share alike motto. This was not applicable only to those brothers who were hippies but also to the poor and starving. The hippies would try and help out all those in need. This helping hand has become a larger part of American culture because the idea was reiterated that you should help those that need help.

The hippies were not a selfish, moral-less group of vagabonds, but a group that was discouraged with the current status of affairs in their government. The government to them did not seem to care for those people who desperately needed help, but catered instead to the upper class people who had a very large say in government. The hippies felt displaced from their government and did not always support all the actions their government took. For example, a large portion of hippies protested against the United States of America involvement in Vietnam because they did not agree with the actions

their government took. This was their right as citizens of the United States of America, though it was an unpopular move at the time. This led to a precedent for future protests. The people will protest against the government to try and implement change, if conventional methods of government will not work. The hippies were not concerned with conventional methods due to their disgust at bureaucracy. The hippies highlighted the importance of making your government responsible for its choices and decisions by reiterating the importance of protests. Until the hippies started protesting in mass, there had not been any large nation wide protests. The government was yet again being held responsible for its decisions and knew that the public would not be easily swayed or cajoled into accepting actions that they did not agree were correct.

The hippies contributed a lot more to American culture than the typical belief. While the hippie was stereotypically heavily involved with drugs, sex, and a lackadaisical approach towards life, they contributed a lot towards modern American society in both good and bad ways. American society no longer believes sex to be a taboo subject to be kept hidden in the dark. American culture accepts people who are different, without alienating them. The hippie belief of brotherhood is still present in American culture, though the government has taken a more active role in assisting the poor and desolate. The hippie influence cannot be separated from the culture of America. The subculture of the American culture in the 1960's and 1970's, the hippie culture, has become infused with American culture and is part of the current society. The attitudes and the beliefs of the hippie are here to stay.