Holly Holland

Title: “Defining Hippies from Heads to Tails: Haight-Ashbury and the Summer of Love”
Faculty Advisor: Dr. David Schuster
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Holly Holland is a senior at IPFW working towards her bachelor’s in Secondary Education with a concentration in Social Studies. Her academic interests include questions of identity and ownership, and exploring alternative narratives that contend with more traditional narratives. Her historical pursuits include digging deeper into American history to explore the formation of countercultures and their specific roles in American political, economic and cultural advancements. Her other creative pursuits include water-coloring, creative writing and travel. This will be Holly’s second time participating in the Annual Undergraduate History Conference, her first being last year, with a paper that questioned the “American dream” and its relation to marginalized groups. She would like to dedicate this presentation to her mother, Patricia Rugg, who considers herself to be very much an “old, proud Hippie!”

Abstract

In 1967 the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco served as a stage for a distinct counterculture to thrive and ultimately integrate into mainstream society. This paper aims to deconstruct the competing perceptions of Hippies during and after the Summer of Love through the lens of Bay Area citizens and journalists of the time. The counterculture of Haight-Ashbury was subject to being defined not only by its neighbors, but also through divisions within the counterculture itself. Through exploring primary source documents such as news reports, editorials, opinion pieces, and first-hand accounts regarding the Haight-Ashbury counterculture, this paper found that defining the Hippie counterculture is subject to competing perceptions.

Within these competing perceptions, there is a correlation between the definers of a counterculture and its evolution into mainstream society. While some obvious definers of the counterculture are those who oppose it, this paper also found that there was a division within the counterculture itself as to what it meant to be a Hippie. For example, the difference between members of the counterculture who identified as Heads or Freaks in regards to their drug use created a deep division within the movement. Within the counterculture itself there was also a division between following its Beatnik roots and branching off to widely different areas. For those on the outside looking in, defining the hippie counterculture ranged from disdain to fanatical fascination, as shown in ads for a ‘Hippieland Tour’ featured in newspapers from the LA Times to the Boston Globe. Eventually as the counterculture itself lost its own ability to self-define, it was subject to commercialization and subsequent acquisition by mainstream media. In exploring the definition of the Hippie counterculture we can see that the process is as much a part of the counterculture as it is a sign of identity formation and ownership.
Bibliographical Note

Sources used in this paper include multiple primary accounts in newspaper articles, opinion pieces, and news reports, as well as a secondary source written by Charles Perry titled *The Haight-Ashbury: A History*. Nicholas Von Hoffman’s serial articles featured in *The Washington Post*, titled “The Acid Affair” provided deep insight into the hippie counterculture while various article advertising a ‘Hippie-tour’ were featured in newspapers from *The Chicago Tribune* to *The Los Angeles Times*. Tensions between members of the counterculture and other marginalized groups were illustrated in an article from “The Acid Affair” series as well as an article from *The New York Times*, while tensions within the counterculture were illustrated in an article by Stephen A. O. Golden in *The New York Times* titled “Hippie Regulars on Haigh Want Part-Timers to Take a Trip.” The secondary source provided by Charles Perry served as a contrast to the narratives presented by the primary sources to sustain depth and historical foresight.