

Introduction

Resistance and power are not separate entities, rather, they complement each other (Bannister, 2010, p.165). One is needed for the other to function: just as revolt is complementary to politics, and critique is to rock 'n roll - a view introduced by Michel Foucault. In the 1960's, there was definitive display of resistance and power in the Western world. 'Power' in this instance is that of the political climate, rallying a turbulent environment of American presidencies, the advocacy of Civil, Feminist and Gay Rights and the American involvement in the Vietnam War. According to the abovementioned Foucauldian formula, revolt must have followed these events, which it did in multiple forms.

Foucault argued that revolutionary thinking and activism in terms of opposition was problematic in radical politics, instead, he advocated opposition as a 'creative process' (Bannister, 2010, p.165). A creative process can be seen as advocacy in a more incremental manner which can be argued to have occurred through the formation of counterculture. Counterculture is a set of cultural and/or societal principles of a subculture within, and unaligned to, a larger culture (Tucker, 2011, p. 241). Subcultures which formed in the 1960s across the United States and the United Kingdom which were a part of this counterculture had values different to those of larger culture which caused friction between them. In order for this friction not to halt counterculture growth, the formation of community was necessary. A community of revolutionaries emerged in fight of the friction through creative production of zines, music, poetry and films wishing to break the status quo (Duncombe, 2014, p.14).

Underlying the unsettled politics were ideologies which served as a catalyst for the social oppression leading up to the 50's. Karl Marx laid this groundwork of early 20th century ideologies which conform to ideas of alienation and categorization (Williams, 1977, p.87). It was stated by Williams that Marx saw culture as insignificant, it was 'always reduced to a direct or indirect expression of some preceding and controlling economic content, or of

political content determined by an economic position or situation' (Williams, p.83). These claims were principle references for critique, attacking them for their universalizing and totalizing approaches, authoritarian and normalizing effects and their inability to address the diversity and heterogeneity of power relations (Lemke, 2011, p.27). However, Foucault argued that critique offered toward these notions were weak and proposed that it was necessary to 'start from the beginning' by asking ourselves what we could base the critique of our society on.

To move beyond historical limits of Classical Marxism was a task tackled by counterculture groups in America and Britain through creative expression and community formation. This can be seen as a way of creating a new ideological groundwork in revolt to the time of social change in the 1960s. Thus, the aim of this paper is to investigate how communities were formed within countercultures, specifically those which evolved in the spur of events of 60's in counterpart to politics.

Political Context

It was, politically and socially, a turbulent time in mid 20th Century America (Tucker, 2011). John F Kennedy was elected president in 1960, 1962 brought the Cuban missile crisis, Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech took place in 1963, as did the US Women's Movement, as well as Kennedy's assassination. The Gulf of Tonkin incident was in 1964, US troops in Vietnam increased reaching 250,000 in 1966, while 1967 embraced the March at the Pentagon. 1968 in particular took the assassination of King, student protests in France and president Nixon's election (Schumacher, 2016, ch. 7-9). 1968 was also the year in which the demonstrations of the democratic convention in Chicago took place. Following this were the Stonewall riots in New York marking the beginning of the Gay Rights movement in 1969, Neil Armstrong reached the moon with NASA. In the midst of this was the emergence of libertarian counterculture groups such as the Black Panther Party and Students for a

Democratic Society, the release of Bob Dylan's albums: "Bob Dylan", "The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan", and "The Times Are A-Changin'". The Human Be-In in San Francisco in 1967 occurred, the first issue of the Rolling Stone was published, and the Monterey Pop Festival took place. The release of John Lennon's "Give Peace a Chance" and Woodstock came in 1969, a consolidating musical event of the cultural wave of the decade.

Counterculture and the 1950s

The term 'subculture' was uncommon before the 1950's but gained popularity with the growth of the Beat Generation and Theodore Roszak's book *The Making of a Counter Culture* (Tucker, 2011, p.241). Furthermore, social conservatism of the 1950s together with the political upheaval of the 60s; namely the Vietnam War and the civil and women's rights movements contributed to the counterculture.

The Beats began as a subculture in the 1950s which grew in popularity the following decade - diffusing across the world with the emergence of television (Spigel & Curtin, 2013, p. 3). The Beat Generation poet, Allen Ginsberg, was involved in the counterculture of the time, advocating values of peace in antiwar demonstrations, being influential in the setup of the 1967 Human Be-In, as well as composing the mantra performed in the 1969 'exorcism of the Pentagon'. Events such as these were significant validations of the key themes that this counterculture stood for. The atmosphere was essentially a reaction to the conservative and homogenous society that had proceeded from the 40s and 50s - as such, the scenes of racial divide and war culture.

From the Beat scene emerged the Hippies, the pivotal moment to distinguish them being the cross-country journey of 'Furthur' - the psychedelic bus driven from the west to the east coast (De Crescenzo & Duncan, 2011, p. 7). The Hippie movement preceded into the 60's, later in which the Summer of Love took place in 1967. The demographics of the people taking part in the movement ranged from college students to intellectuals, musicians, artists

and political activists, all of which with equivalent goals to challenge the existing American government, politics and culture (Tucker, 2011, p. 242). Among the Hippies were the Students for a Democratic Society and the Black Panthers which were infamous counterculture subgroups promoting political and social activism of justice and rights. Other subcultures also emerged at this time such as rockers, punks and bikers, though they had further intentions than anti-war and peace. Specifically, they took interest in rebellion as a whole, being 'Born Against', or put simply by The Ramones: "I'm against it" (Duncombe, 2014, p. 47). The Hippies were more so involved with what was called 'modern bohemia', or the 'bohemian diaspora' (Duncombe, p. 58). They were engaged in community forming, something not based on spatial context but using communication as their binding force (Duncombe, p.61). To illustrate this, Hippies were 'an island of deviant meanings within the sea of its society' (Gray, Campbell, Erickson, Hanson & Wood, 2007, p.147). This sense of community formation through communicative forms such as music is what was special of the Hippie subculture, true in both the United States of America and in Britain.

1960s in America

As mentioned, counterculture in America surged amongst the political status. After John F. Kennedy's assassination in 1963, the next elected president was Lyndon Johnson in 1965 (Schumaker, 2016, ch. 8). In his power he is speculated to have escalated the Vietnam war which served as a catalyst for aggression and engagement of the Students for a Democratic Society. Antiwar protests arose in universities in demonstration to end the oppression and poverty in the political climate which, as a result, 'exhausted [main-culture Americans] by the social and political upheavals that the movements were advocating' (Tucker, 2011, p.243). Activism was not exclusive to students which is represented by the array of musicians who also took a foregrounding role in the revolution.

One artist who emerged as a symbol of this counterculture was Bob Dylan. Despite the popular opinion of his mediocre talent in singing, he captivated the audience by means of his charisma and the symbolic poetry of his lyrics (Tucker, 2011, p. 321). He was inspired by the Beat Generation, specifically poetry by Allen Ginsberg, among others. Dylan was recognized by his ability to transform the sense of popular music while accentuating political issues. One song which illustrates this is 'Blowin' in the Wind'. The lyrics are subtle but powerful in their anti-war significance. He makes references to cannon balls, questioning 'how many times [they] will have to fly before they are forever banned', and poses questions of "how many years must some people exist, Before they're allowed to be free?", "how many times can a man turn his head, And pretend that he just doesn't see?" - the answer to these questions to Dylan was 'Blowin' in the wind'. Dylan elaborated on what he meant by this phrase in a 1962 interview to *Sing Out!*: "[the answer] ain't no book or movie or TV show or discussion group, man. It's in the wind." (The Editors of 'TIME-LIFE', 2017). A possible understanding of this is that the answer was not hidden or highly complex, the answer was far more obvious though a blind eye was turned to this simplicity. The answer of liberating those oppressed, disengaging from the ongoing war and spreading peace was 'blowin' in the wind' but ignored by those with the power to make the necessary alterations.

Furthermore, his song released in 1964, 'The Times They Are A- Changin'', had themes in parallel to this. It is a song which does not reflect on what was happening in the past or the present or look into how things were in fact 'A-Changin'', but it outlines a feeling of retrospective melancholia along with the hope for a future with a possibility for change. Both song lyrics suggested that the dissatisfied younger generation could find solutions to problems created by the generation before them, who were unable to come with appropriate resolutions. The power of the absent context in 'The Times They Are A- Changin'' is that the song is able to live on and resonate in farther periods of time than that of the 60's. For

example, the student-led March For Our Lives in 2018 saw the comeback of Dylan's song performed by Jennifer Hudson. An example of its timelessness is given in an NPR article where a writing teacher quoted: "When I made reference to this song coming out of the '60s, and [being] about the '60s, there were some blank stares. And yet, the song spoke to them," – claiming 'the song to be more relevant now than ever' (Neary & Tyler-Ameen, 2018). The feeling of community is intensified in this way as there is indeed no necessary special configuration, but the same lyrics recited around 50 years apart can have effects such as these.

Dylan released more records in the later years of the 60s such as 'Masters of War' and 'Like a Rolling Stone' which continued the theme of generational conflict (Tucker, 2011, p. 322). 'Masters of War' had more explicit lyrics such as the emotive text: "while young people's blood runs out of their bodies into the mud". Artists covered these songs at their own performances, such as Jimmy Hendrix covering 'Like a Rolling Stone' and Joan Baez covering 'Blowin' in the Wind'. Performing these songs provides greater advocacy of the lyrics which spreads the countercultural message of the music farther. Other anthems of anti-war include 'Eve of Destruction' by Barry McGuire, and 'The Fish Cheer', which was renamed the 'Vietnam song' when performed at Woodstock, by Country Joe & The Fish. The growing popularity of this subgenre of War Era music was not limited to the United States as seen by the involvement by The Beatles and The Who in Britain.

1960s in Britain

The United Kingdom indeed had an emerging counterculture in the 1960s. Rather than specifically anti-war notions in media, the emergence of counterculture took more of an anti-hegemonic ideology (Daryll Slack & Grossberg, 1983, p. 162). Cultural hegemony was an issue raised by Stuart Hall, a British cultural theorist. He argued that common sense was being constructed under rule of Margaret Thatcher who defined what it meant to be 'Truly

British' (Hall, 1990, p.21). Ideas within this notion include individualism, materialism, reductionism, privatization and the English-language preference (Marsella, 2005, p.2). Cultural Hegemony also confined identity, claiming it to be constructed by society and not by one self (Daryl Slack & Grossberg, p.178). Revolting against this notion was important to many scholars who pleaded individualism and autonomy. Accordingly, counterculture formation happened unanimously with groups of people who found themselves distant from the conventional, alike the movement in America.

In Birmingham, Stuart Hall found the importance of these subcultures profound and created, alongside of the autonomous creation of subgroups, the Birmingham School (Hall, 1990, p. 11). This was a subset to the University of Birmingham English Department, dedicated more so to the critical study and engagement of literature, being given the name 'Centre of Contemporary Culture Studies' (Gray, et al., 2007, p.16). The importance of the study of literature diluted, with more interest being taken up in media and subcultures by the students. The center aimed to develop the Gramscian project which addressed issues the Italian philosopher, Antonio Gramsci, called anti-hegemony (Hall, p.17). This was essentially to break free from the hegemonic power instituted in Britain which shaped common sense among the population. For instance, subcultures prospering in this center included a group of feminists who adopted approaches in increasing the importance of women in this culture and breaking the conservative patriarchal image of women. As well as feminists, Stuart Hall's research rose awareness of the Hippie 'society' which effectively describes the emergence of the culture, while defending the 'muddle' of their nature (Gray, et al., p.147). Hall comments that Hippie society was a 'way of life [...] which rejects and despises, precisely, the language and act of interpretation'.

The teachings within the Centre of Contemporary Culture Studies often revolved around conducting an 'ideological critique of the way the humanities and the arts presented

themselves as parts of disinterested knowledge' (Hall, 1990, p.15). Students at this time were autonomous to the point that they often were without guidance of a teachers, meaning they set up their own reading lists and published academic works on their subgroups which is the foundation of subculture literature now (Hall, p.18).

The music scene in the UK reflected this theme of counterculture. A song which synthesizes the environment of the decade is John Lennon's 'Give Peace a Chance' of 1969. The lyrics reference Bob Dylan and Allen Ginsberg - both having expressed their despair in literary forms. Lennon affirms "Everybody's talking about Bagism, Shagism, Dragism, Madism, Ragism, Tagism, this-ism, that-ism [...] Everybody's talking about, revolution". This line connotes to ideas of not judging individuals on visible characteristics and the idea that all of the confining '-isms' may be extraneous, implied by the colloquial use of 'this' and 'that'. Perhaps Lennon implies we should let go of these confining and alienating (Marxist) labels as a whole. He also composed the line: 'United Nations, Congratulations', as such to raise satire in that the United Nations have not upheld peace in this decade of turmoil. The chorus repetitively chants "All we are saying is give peace a chance", as to raise the general message of bringing peace to everyone and could be charged relating to the ongoing Vietnam War as Lennon took part in the anti-war activism.

Critical Reflection

Resistance and power as complementary agents to each other can be seen in America and in Britain through the formation of counterculture groups in the 1960s in reaction to political power. The counterculture of Hippies in particular in revolt to war and conflict at the time, using the medium of music to take action in this, was powerful and gave hope to the younger generation in particular that revolution was possible (Gray, et al., 2007, p.147). Allen Ginsberg, Bob Dylan, John Lennon and Stuart Hall, among others, aided the formation of an anti-war and anti-hegemonic community which supported the emergence of the Hippie

subculture, though these individuals may not have considered themselves as part of the Hippie society, per se. Arguably the movement served as a creative process while being in itself incrementally revolutionary to the politics of the time, without explicit aggressive nature but through the formation of a strong standing community. Reducing the notions of Classical Marxism can be identified through the departure of alienation within these groups as the community spread across country and continent, as well as erasing notions of categorization through the liberation of gay and feminist rights movements, enhancing society in such a way as not to exclude certain identities from what was deemed acceptable.

A modern interpretation of counterculture and community creation is the modern group named Extinction Rebellion. This group started in the United Kingdom with 15 active individuals. These were operational in campaigning civil disobedience which would transform how the climate and ecological emergency is perceived and enforcing governmental action (Knights, 2019). This group has grown phenomenally - now established in each continent except for Antarctica with participants numbers soaring into the hundreds of thousands. What the groups do is fight against the idea that this is the sixth mass extinction by blocking roads, delivering speeches and 'attempting to cause as much disruption as [they] possibly can. The group set demands which at this time are not met by those in power, for the most part, and find ways of creating a counterculture to battle this in a non-violent way. Penguin Publishers share that literature is what Extinction Rebellions feel empowered by, works by Rachel Carson, Martin Epsom and Margaret Atwood, to name a few (Mackay, 2019). Some shed light on the issues at hand while others take a more fictional approach and sketch a future to come. This could too be argued as a creative process which can promote a positive future for the current population and those to come.

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