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# Dissenting Fashion : Hippie fashion on film in the 1960s and 1970s

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# **Dissenting Fashion: Hippie fashion on film in the 1960s and 1970s.**

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Master 1 MEEF Second Degré Anglais – 2021-2022

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Sous la direction du Docteur Marianne Kac-Vergne

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## Introduction

“If you’re going to San Francisco, be sure to wear some flowers in your hair”<sup>1</sup>. These lyrics directly make one think of one of the most famous countercultures of all times: the hippie counterculture. As they suggest, stepping into this counterculture required a physical transformation. Indeed, countercultures are cultures that develop their own social codes and systems alongside dominant cultures. Their codes and values are thus different from the ones of the dominant culture as they develop beside and often go against them<sup>2</sup>. This is why people taking part in them have to change. And this change can be manifested through their appearance and way of dressing. Besides, because a notion of rejection is inherent to countercultures, they can disturb the dominant society.

The hippie counterculture started in the middle of the 1960s<sup>3</sup> as the successor of the Beat Generation Movement that took place in the 1950s. Like people from the Beat Generation Movement, hippies rejected the consumer society, conservatism, and symbols of the idealised American Dream of their time and wished to live outside of the dominant culture<sup>4</sup>. They are often linked to the New Left, which is a left-wing political movement that developed at the same period. However, hippies did not always belong to this movement, nor were political activists, and parts of both political wings “shared a common impulse toward personal freedom”<sup>5</sup>. Indeed, when talking about New Left and New Right groups Students for a Democratic Society and Young Americans for Freedom, Rebecca Klatch implies that “a portion in both groups rejected the counterculture (...) while another portion in each organization embraced this youth movement”<sup>6</sup>. This counterculture marked the history of the United States because of the effect it had on the dominant American culture.

Hippies, hips, or “freaks” were mostly young people coming from what is called the “youth counterculture”<sup>7</sup>, consisting of students who were born during the World War II Baby Boom. These students wished to “create a new symbolic imaginary, which took place through music, fashions and alternative lifestyles that stood out in stark contrast to those enjoyed by

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<sup>1</sup>Scott, McKenzie, “San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Some Flowers in Your Hair)”, May 13, 1967

<sup>2</sup> From the definition given in the Britannica Dictionary.

<sup>3</sup> Marie Plassart, *La contre-culture américaine : années 1960, révoltes et utopies*, Neuilly, Atlande, 2011, 35.

<sup>4</sup> Barry Miles, *Hippie*, translated by Denis Montagnon, France, Hachette, 2004, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Rebecca Klatch, *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s*, United States of America, University of California Press, October 20, 1999, chapter 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Kertakova Marija, Jordeva Sonja, Mojsov Kiro, “Fashion during the 20th century post-war periods”, *Tekstilna industrija*, Borj 2019, 35.

their parents and grandparents”<sup>8</sup>, who had lived during the Great Depression. People from the previous generation were attached to “belongings and to a fear of lacking”<sup>9</sup>, because of the difficulties they had experienced during this period. This situation led to the development of a more materialistic society that valued personal success and possessions. Besides, during the 1960s, the American society was also involved in an armed conflict in Vietnam. Many activists, including hippies, denounced this war and asked for peace<sup>10</sup>. The Civil Rights Movement was also at its peak during the 1960s, gathering black people fighting for their rights around iconic figures such as Martin Luther King together. This period was a period of growing tensions and imminent change in the American society of the time, that was rejected and contested by hippies through different means, including fashion. The movement came to its apex with the first Human Be-In in the Golden Gate Park of San Francisco<sup>11</sup>. It took place on January 14, 1967 and started the Summer of Love<sup>12</sup>. Allen Cohen, who participated in the organization of this gathering published a hippie manifesto in the underground newspaper *Berkeley Barb*<sup>13</sup>. This event aimed at showing that the hippies were not “just a group of some colourful marginals but a structured movement, which welcomed a growing number of young people, who agreed with the ideas and ideals [they] brought forward”<sup>14</sup> and marked the American and International recognition of the hippie movement<sup>15</sup>, that continued until the 1970s when the last hippies remained<sup>16</sup>. The Summer of Love, which started in 1967 hence launched the popularity of the hippies, who became more and more numerous. The growing movement even made the Woodstock Festival possible in August 1969 in the state of New York. This festival was a huge success since it welcomed more people than it was supposed to and is considered as one of the most important and mythic hippie festivals today<sup>17</sup>. Hippies contested the conformism and materialism of the society they grew up in by living in isolated communes, organizing demonstrations, and by publishing their own underground newspapers such as the *San Francisco Oracle* or the *Berkeley Barb*. Their contestation was covered a lot by the media of

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<sup>8</sup> Antonella Cagnolati, José Luis Hernández, Andrés Payà Rico, “Uprising ! Searching for new subjectivities in the Sixties. Introduction”, *ESPACIO, TIEMPO Y EDUCACIÓN* Vol. 6, no. 1, January 2019, abstract, 1.

<sup>9</sup> Antonella Cagnolati, José Luis Hernández, Andrés Payà Rico, “Uprising ! Searching for new subjectivities in the Sixties. Introduction”, *ESPACIO, TIEMPO Y EDUCACIÓN* Vol. 6, no. 1, January 2019, 2.

<sup>10</sup> Barry Miles, *Hippie*, translated by Denis Montagnon, France, Hachette, 2004, 9.

<sup>11</sup> Frédéric Robert, *La Révolution Hippie*, France, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011, 76.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>14</sup> Translated quote from Frédéric Robert, *La Révolution Hippie*, France, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011, 78.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>16</sup> Barry Miles, *Hippie*, translated by Denis Montagnon, France, Hachette, 2004, 362.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 322.

the time, such as newspapers or the radio, but also by artistic media such as cinema. Their representations of hippies brought newcomers to the movement, but also created a hippie trend, that was followed by the youth, and which participated in the evolution of the fashion industry and the society in general.

Indeed, cinema evolved to represent more and more rebellious characters that were admired by teenagers of the time, who were generally considered as new consumers<sup>18</sup> by industries. *The Wild One*, by Lazlo Benedek released in 1953 for instance depicts riders stirring up trouble in a little town<sup>19</sup>. The teen movie genre even developed, with its rebellious figures such as Mary Lee in *Girls Town*, by Charles F. Haas released in 1959, or Judy in *Rebel Without a Cause* by Nicholas Ray released in 1955<sup>20</sup>. In *Les Teen Movies*<sup>21</sup>, Adrienne Boutang and Célia Sauvage explain that this genre, deriving from the teensploitation genre – that developed in the 1950s – does not represent adolescence as a transitory period but as a hermetical and autonomous one that is away from the codes and responsibilities of adulthood. It underlines the fact that teenagers or even adults wished to stay in this period as long as possible and avoid the adult world. Adrienne Boutang and Célia Sauvage identify two types of teen movies: the ones which represent an “indirect rebellion”<sup>22</sup> – with characters evolving in a safe and controlled environment - and the ones which represent a “frontal rebellion”<sup>23</sup> – with anti-conformist, rebellious and sometimes delinquent characters. The representation of characters who defied the rules of the dominant culture was thus more and more common in the film industry. Furthermore, when rock music lyrics depicted rebels, the cinema offered a living image of them. Indeed, they were materialised on the screen and could become models for the young generation<sup>24</sup>, who could find inspiration in their attitude, but also in their appearance and their costumes. Therefore, depictions of hippies, who were considered as rebels at the time, flourished in the 1960s and participated in the growth of the movement.

Hippie fashion has been studied by a lot of scholars, such as Yvonne Connickie, in the “The 1960s” volume of *Fashions of a Decade*, which was published in 2007. Her work portrays the different hippie styles and their evolution throughout the decade, amongst other styles. Different papers on the incidence of hippie fashion on today’s fashion were also written, such as “Influence of 1960’s hippie counterculture in contemporary fashion”, written by several

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<sup>18</sup> Marie, Plassart, *La contre-culture américaine : années 1960, révoltes et utopies*, Neuilly, Atlante, 2011, 37.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>21</sup> Adrienne Boutang, Célia Sauvage, *Les Teen Movies*, Paris, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2011.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>24</sup> Marie, Plassart, *La contre-culture américaine : années 1960, révoltes et utopies*, Neuilly, Atlante, 2011, 37.

scholars and published in *Trans Stellar*<sup>25</sup> in August 2017. The main argument developed by scholars about hippie fashion is its evolution from what hippies, who were at the margin of society, wore at the time to a huge inspiration both for designers in terms of creation and customers in terms of consumption patterns – with recycling and second-hand fashion. Papers mainly mention the hippie contestation by evoking their lifestyle or sexual life. Fashion is however not predominantly tackled as a means of contestation. Papers nevertheless link hippie fashion to concrete material such as magazines, photographs, movies or references to the pop culture figures of the time and my paper shall similarly discuss hippie fashion as a means of contestation through cinema.

Hence considering that fashion and cinema are forms of art, this dissertation shall be linked to the notion Art and Contestation of the Première and Terminale high school program. Indeed, it will examine to what extent the representations of hippie fashion in film stand for forms of contestation of the established order.

It is based on a corpus of films that include the thriller *Psych-Out*, released in 1968 and directed by Richard Rush. It depicts the life of Jenny, who arrives in San Francisco to look for her hippie brother. She meets hippies when she arrives, gets acquainted with them, falls in love with one and finally lives with them. It will also be based on the romantic comedy *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!*, released in 1968 and directed by Hy Averback. Its title refers to Alice B. Toklas, who wrote an autobiographical cookbook in 1954. In this cookbook, she writes how she prepares cannabis brownies. The film recounts the life of an upper middle-class man, who falls in love with a hippie woman and becomes a hippie. The documentary *Woodstock*, released in 1970 and directed by Michael Wadleigh documents the three days of the iconic Woodstock festival of 1969. The last film I will look into is the musical *Hair*, released in 1979 and directed by Miloš Forman. This film is a film adaptation of the Broadway musical entitled *Hair*, which was created in 1967. It retrospectively portrays a group of hippies, who meet a man arriving in New York to enlist in the army. All these films offer representations of hippies: being from different genres, ranging from thrillers to comedies, they offer a panel of representations that are interesting to study in order to understand the way this movement contested society through its appearance. These diverse genres offer different points of views on the movement and allow us to compare and contrast these representations. Besides, *Psych-Out*, *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* and *Woodstock* date back to 1968 and 1970. They offer

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<sup>25</sup> Jony Abdullah Jaman, Islam Md. Asiqul, Tanzila Tabassum Mustary Akter Jhumu, MD. Eanamul Haque Nizam, „Influence of 1960’s hippie counterculture in contemporary fashion”, *Trans Stellar* Vol. 7, no. 4, August 2017.



contemporary representations of hippies. *Hair* dates back from 1979. It is thus posterior to the hippie countercultural movement, since it could be considered as ending in the beginning of the 1970s, when hippie fashion and lifestyle became mainstream. It is however an adaptation of the Broadway musical dating back to 1967. These films allow us to portray them and to see how they were represented during the peak of the movement, and to see a nostalgic approach of them dating back to when it had ended. Besides, *Hair*, *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* and *Psych-Out* are fictional representations of hippies whereas *Woodstock* is a documentary. Fictional films allow us to see how hippies were perceived by their audience, film producers and the film industry, whereas *Woodstock* draws a less filtered representation of them and permits us to see them as they really were when they went to the festival. Studied as an ensemble, this corpus of films thus allows us to envision the evolution of the representation of hippie fashion through contemporary or posterior, and fictional or documentary representations. Finally, they feature hippies who live in San Francisco (*Psych-Out*), Los Angeles (*I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!*), New York (*Hair*), around Woodstock and from different places in the United States since the festival welcomed people from everywhere (*Woodstock*). These films thus display a great diversity of hippies, who come from different American cities. That's another reason why they are interesting to study.

Concerning the reception of these films: reviews about them are rather positive. The December 31, 1969, issue of *Variety* quoted that *Woodstock* was “a virtually perfect record of the music festival”. The documentary won an Oscar for Best Feature Documentary in 1970<sup>26</sup> and was selected by the National Film Preservation Board to be part of the National Film Registry in the Congress library in 1996<sup>27</sup>. Concerning *Hair*, Vincent Canby, a *New York Times* journalist said that the film was “a rollicking musical memoir, as much a recollection of the show as of the period” in the March 14, 1979, issue of the newspaper<sup>28</sup>. The film won a César<sup>29</sup> and was nominated for the Golden Globe Best Motion Picture – Comedy or Musical – Prize in 1980. *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* and *Psych-Out* did not win prizes. However, Leigh Taylor-Young, who plays Jenny in *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* was nominated for the Most Promising Newcomer – Female – Golden Globe Prize<sup>30</sup>, and its screenwriters Paul Mazursky and Larry Tucker were nominated for the Best Written American Comedy and the Best Written American Original Screenplay prizes of the Writers Guild of America. It received a rather positive review

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<sup>26</sup> “Woodstock”, *Variety*, December 31, 1969.

<sup>27</sup> Christopher Stern, “National Film Registry taps 25 more pix”, *Variety*, December 2, 1996.

<sup>28</sup> Canby, Vincent. “Film: 1969 Relives in ‘Hair’”, *The New York Times*, March 14, 1979.

<sup>29</sup> Website of the César Académie des Arts et Techniques du Cinéma.

<sup>30</sup> The Golden Globes website.

from Vincent Canby in *The New York Times* in 1968<sup>31</sup>. As for *Psych-Out*, *Variety* quoted, “Rush’s direction is quite exceptional. Considering what coin he had to play with, it is worthy of 20 times the apparent budget” in its December 31, 1967 issue. As this quote shows, the budgets given to the producers of these films were not the same. However, they all had an audience watching them. These films, as part of the important medium that is cinema, have thus participated to the spreading and perpetuation of hippie representations.

This paper shall first identify the range of hippie styles presented in the films of the corpus. These styles converge towards one common aim of contesting the mainstream but are various and have complex roots. It will then demonstrate to what extent hippie fashion reflects hippie values and how it participated to their marginalization. The power of fashion will be discussed and the outcome of hippie contestation through fashion will be examined.

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<sup>31</sup> Canby, Vincent. “Screen: ‘I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!’: Peter Sellers Stars as Lawyer Turned Hippie”, *The New York Times*, October 8, 1968.

## **I. Controversial looks: a motion picture typology of the hippie**

Hippies used their styles as a means of both identification and contestation. As one observes different representations of hippies, such as the films I study in this dissertation, it appears that the hippies shared common physical features, but also that they expressed their ideas through different styles and inspirations. Indeed, in the films, it is largely because of their clothes that the audience identify hippies as hippies. The films also present a large range of hippie styles, displaying their variety. These films thus portray hippies as belonging to a heterogeneous group, which contests and contrasts with the dominant culture through the use of fashion. Therefore, I shall undertake a typology of the hippie, and try to describe the different ways in which they asserted their identity and expressed their contestation, with the help of images taken from the films under study. I will first examine the most simple and common hippie styles that films of the corpus represent to end with the most original or specific ones.

### **A) The choice of the natural over the artificial**

First, the hippies were known for wearing casual and nature-friendly inspired clothing. Indeed, they considered themselves as closely linked to nature and to the Native Americans' cause. They chose the natural over the artificiality they linked to the society of the time. This is one of the multiple ways they communicated their contestation through fashion.

They wore second hand or handcrafted clothes since “the counterculture showed affinity for “natural” materials, handmade items, non-commercial ideas, and home-grown music and musicians”<sup>32</sup>. These handcrafted clothes went hand in hand with their denunciation of the American Dream and of the consumer society that had developed in the United States. Because of this contestation, people from the dominant culture and the mainstream press saw them as a “scandalous perversity driven towards the destruction of the traditional values upon which the American society had been built long ago”<sup>33</sup>. Indeed, hippies rejected the codes of the American society. They dropped out of university and did not get jobs to build a mainstream consumer family life. This lifestyle broke with the traditional and valued mainstream American lifestyle. Because they disrupted the society they lived in by refusing to even live in it, they were seen as bringing shame to their relatives and to the mainstream. It led to growing tensions between the

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<sup>32</sup> Nadya Zimmerman, *Counterculture Kaleidoscope*, United States of America, The University of Michigan Press, 2008, 18.

<sup>33</sup> Antonella Cagnolati, José Luis Hernández, Andrés Payà Rico, “Uprising! Searching for new subjectivities in the Sixties. Introduction”, *ESPACIO, TIEMPO Y EDUCACIÓN* Vol. 6, no. 1, January 2019, 4.

previous generation and the youth<sup>34</sup> and to the creation of a representation of the youth as dangerous and chaotic<sup>35</sup>. However, the hippies are also considered as “the first ever culture who introduced the uses of second-hand clothes in contemporary fashion”<sup>36</sup>. Indeed, they bought or got their clothes in thrift stores, could cut new garments out of old fabrics and hangings<sup>37</sup> and looked for “old outmoded second-hand clothes”<sup>38</sup>. Such a scene can be found in *Psych-Out*, after Jenny is welcomed by a community of hippies and is trying on clothes in a place giving garments and accessories for free. The wish to create their own clothes and to recycle old clothes matched both their protest against consumerism since they preferred handmade or thrifted clothes to brand new clothes made by designers, who were considered as taking part in capitalism and consumerism at the time, and their proclaimed environmental concern since they thus recycled old items into new ones. Moreover, this way of getting clothes suited their lifestyle and economic situation since some of them did not work. They sold their creations or had jobs in which they were as free as possible, but they often did not earn a lot of money<sup>39</sup>.

This closeness to nature also led those called the “flower children”<sup>40</sup>, because of their love of nature and of their wish to resemble flowers<sup>41</sup>, to give a huge importance to the human body. Indeed, “While the hippies didn’t abandon the consumer aspect of nudity, they inspired a new aesthetic that envisioned the raw human body as an object of beauty.”<sup>42</sup>. As Micah L. Issitt says, the consumer society developed a commercial aesthetic linked to the “seductive and perfect human body”. In *Hair*, the body of Shella, who belongs to the dominant culture but befriends hippies, corresponds to the mainstream standards of beauty with her long blond hair and her hourglass figure. In *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!*, Nancy, who is a hippie, also has a body that corresponds to these standards. In the film, it is highlighted with a lot of close-ups of her body throughout the film. As Micah L. Issitt says, hippies still viewed the human body as

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<sup>34</sup> Antonella Cagnolati, José Luis Hernández, Andrés Payà Rico, “Uprising! Searching for new subjectivities in the Sixties. Introduction”, *ESPACIO, TIEMPO Y EDUCACIÓN* Vol. 6, no. 1, January 2019, 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

<sup>36</sup> Abdullah Jaman Jony, Md. Asiqul Islam, Tanzila Tabassum Mustary Akter Jhumu, MD. Eanamul Haque Nizam, “Influence of 1960’s hippie counterculture in contemporary fashion”, *Trans Stellar* Vol. 7, no. 4, August 2017, 11.

<sup>37</sup> Joel Lobenthal, “Hippie Style”, *Love to Know*, <https://fashion-history.lovetoknow.com/fashion-history-eras/hippie-style>, 15/05/22.

<sup>38</sup> Barry Miles, *Hippie*, translated by Denis Montagnon, France, Hachette, 2004, 16.

<sup>39</sup> Frédéric Robert, *La Révolution Hippie*, France, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011, 73-74.

<sup>40</sup> Antonella Cagnolati, José Luis Hernández, Andrés Payà Rico, “Uprising! Searching for new subjectivities in the Sixties. Introduction”, *ESPACIO, TIEMPO Y EDUCACIÓN* Vol. 6, no. 1, January 2019, 3.

<sup>41</sup> “Hippies identify with flowers, in which they see their own ideal of existence: life carefree under the sun, without work, unfailingly gentle”, Joe David Brown, *The Hippies: by the correspondents of Time*, United States of America, New York: Time Incorporated, cop. 1967, 105.

<sup>42</sup> Micah L. Issitt, *Hippies*, “A guide to an American Subculture”, United States of America, Greenwood Press, 2009, 22.

an object of beauty that could be desired. However, what was preferred by the hippies was the human body in its natural appearance and ease without artificiality. Therefore, some of them wished to stay nude, to wear loose garments, such as long skirts for women<sup>43</sup>, or to remain bare chested as it can be seen in the documentary *Woodstock*.



Figure 1: A crowd of festivalgoers, *Woodstock* (Wadleigh, 1970)

In these two images taken from the documentary, a huge crowd of festivalgoers is visible in a long shot. The dominant colours are blue and beige, the colours of jeans and of white skin.

Figure 2: A crowd of festivalgoers, *Woodstock* (Wadleigh, 1970)

Indeed, jeans were worn by workers and thus were not formal and corporate garments. Therefore, they were chosen by the hippies, who wanted to remain outside of this normalized society. According to Yvonne Connikie, “young hippie men and women wore their hair long, with headbands, and dressed in worn-out jeans. Anything, in fact, that was not “neat.”<sup>44</sup> Moreover, hippies often did not have the means to buy expensive clothes.

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<sup>43</sup> At this time, the miniskirt, invented by Mary Quant, was trendy and revolutionary. Many women thus chose to wear it.

<sup>44</sup> Yvonne Connikie, *Fashions of a Decade*, “The 1960s”, United States of America, Chelsea House Publishers, 2007, [1990], 24.



Figure 3: Nancy painting the back of a man, *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* (Averback, 1968)

Their love for the natural human body even led them to decorate their bodies. Indeed, “In complete contrast to the clean, geometric lines of the “space-age” look, hippies decorated everything, even painting their bodies”<sup>45</sup>. The celebration of the human body through body painting can be seen in the film *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* (Figure 3) when Nancy, who is a hippie, is seen painting on the back of another hippie. The liberation of the naked human body can be closely linked to the sexual revolution that happened at the time and which was also represented and led by the hippies. Indeed, the “decorative appeal was provided (...) by the contours outlined by (...) body-clinging garments”<sup>46</sup> and “their clothes were a paean to sexuality and sensuality”<sup>47</sup>. Here, the man Nancy is painting the back of only wears a pair of jeans and is bare chested. She is painting flowers on his back, and then explains that she does so because she loves him. The act of painting the body can thus be seen as a celebration of the human body and as a sensual gesture.



Figure 4: Dave wearing a Native American inspired outfit, *Psych-Out* (Rush, 1968)

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>46</sup> Joel Lobenthal. “Hippie Style”, *Love to Know*, <https://fashion-history.lovetoknow.com/fashion-history-eras/hippie-style>, 15/05/22.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

Finally, some hippies wore Native American inspired clothes or accessories. Indeed, in *Psych-Out*, Dave, who is presented as a hippie, has long hair and is wearing a headband with a Native American pattern as well as a Native American inspired ensemble (Figure 4). Native Americans were a source of inspiration for hippies in aesthetic terms but also from a political and philosophical point of view:

Smith locates hippies' and the New Left's interest in Indians in their alienation from their own culture and search of alternatives. Hippies sought Indian tribalism, communalism, ecology and spirituality<sup>48</sup>

As hippies wanted to protest against and to stay out of the American society of the time, some of them also sought to protest against its views on Native Americans and the narrative that was created around their story linked to the Frontier. Indeed, Native Americans saw their culture replaced by what white Americans considered as a better one, in the name of Manifest Destiny and later the American Dream, which led to their disappearance or assimilation to the US-American culture. Hippies could have made links between their situation as outcasts in a conformist society and the situation of the Native Americans who were alienated from the dominant U.S. culture after they were assimilated, both being minorities. The hippies thus saw Native Americans as models since they embodied a panel of values that they shared and that they wished to share with the world<sup>49</sup>. Besides, Native Americans were also close to nature and they lived in communities, like a great number of hippies, who chose to live in communes. The characters of *Psych-Out*, including Dave, are living in a house as a community. These elements of analysis, brought from *Psych-Out*, *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* and *Woodstock*, thus show that one of the hippies' ways of expression through fashion amongst many was the use of simplicity, the celebration of the natural human body and the borrowing of Native American codes and clothes. These choices were explained by their economic situation, since they either did not work, or had jobs that did not allow them to earn a lot of money, but also by a concern for nature and their rebellion against consumerism and the American society.

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<sup>48</sup> Haley, Brian D. Review *Taking Hippies and Indians Seriously*, reviewed work: Sherry L. Smith, *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2021, *Current Anthropology* Vol. 54, no. 3, June 2013, 391–93.

<sup>49</sup> “The counterculture saw Indians as genuine holdouts against conformity, inherently spiritual, ecological, tribal, communal – the original long hairs”, Sherry L. Smith, *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power*, Ney York, Oxford University Press, 2012, abstract.

## B) Being eccentric: multiple ways of asserting an identity

There were many different styles in hippie fashion because hippies chose to express their eccentricity in different ways, and “the freedom that fashion allowed meant that everyone could dress up. All young people, in fact, could think of themselves as performers and ‘do their own thing.’”<sup>50</sup> This idea of eccentricity came from the very idea of standing out from the society of conformity of the time and concerned especially the African Americans, who were fighting for their rights at the time and thus wanted to assert their identity. Eccentricity gave birth to an infinite source of inspirations.

I will be using the term “eccentric”, in its etymological sense – the word comes from the Greek *ek* and *kentron* giving *ekkentros*, meaning “out of the centre” - to evoke hippies who defied fashion the most. These hippies, as we can see in the films of the corpus, wore extravagant accessories and clothes, bright colours or clothes that seemed to be completely in contrast with the time period, context and reality they were worn in. Examples of this eccentricity can be found in the documentary *Woodstock*.



Figure 5: A woman with a feather hat, *Woodstock* (Wadleigh, 1970)

People who were at Woodstock mainly wore casual and simple clothes. Nevertheless, some of them appeared particularly eccentric. This woman is indeed wearing what appears to be a handmade multicoloured feather hat. In this medium close shot, she is smiling and showing pride. This feather hat is reminiscent of hats that wealthy women wore in the Edwardian Era or hats women wore for special occasions such as horse races, banquets or weddings. These hats would however display fewer and smaller feathers that would match in colour. They would also be ornamented with jewels for instance. This hippie hat thus has been worn as a satire of the

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<sup>50</sup> Yvonne Connikie. *Fashions of a Decade*, “The 1960s”, United States of America, Chelsea House Publishers, 2007, 6-7.



upper-middle class style. Here, the feathers seem to have been organised at random to evoke spontaneity, as opposed to a conventional hat. Besides, some hippies considered themselves as performers living in a theatrical and mythical world, as Joel Lobenthal states when he says,

They disguised and revealed themselves in costumes that were avatars of theatrical or historical or mythological identities, rather than the easily legible roles recognized by contemporary society.<sup>51</sup>



Figure 6: Ballerinas, seen in Claude's imagination, *Hair* (Forman, 1979)



Figure 7: Harold choosing new clothes, *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* (Averback, 1968)

This phenomenon can be found in the films *Hair* and *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!*. Indeed, in the former, the main character Claude took LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) and sees the world in a hippie way (Figure 6). In this hippie world, he sees ballerinas, who symbolize theatricality and dressing up that is linked to the way in which hippies inscribed themselves in a dramatic imaginary world. Other aspects of theatricality can be found in this passage of *Hair*, such as the drapes and dramatic lighting of the scene. Indeed, in the different portraits that are made of other hippies in this LSD scene, the characters are shown singing and dancing as if they were in a play. Besides, in *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!*, Harold (Figure 7) is choosing his new look as a hippie. This scene is decisive since it marks the passing of the character from the realm of mainstream society to the realm of hippies and this change is marked by his change of clothes. In this scene, he is dressed in a costume reminiscent of the Victorian Era. He wears a white shirt, with a jacket and a top hat. But he also wears small round glasses and artisanal Native American inspired jewellery, which contrast in his look. The fact that this style is his first ever hippie style emphasises the theatricality of the scene and of this outfit since he breaks sharply with the image he had before – of a man from the dominant culture only wearing suits and his

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<sup>51</sup> Joel Lobenthal. “Hippie Style”, *Love to Know*, <https://fashion-history.lovetoknow.com/fashion-history-eras/hippie-style>, 15/05/22.

hair perfectly styled - and inscribes himself as a new hippie, celebrating a “romanticized view of the past”<sup>52</sup> in this attire, associated with diverse symbols, inspirations, and imaginary creations. This quote by Nadya Zimmerman, who describes a concert of the psychedelic music group Grateful Dead, describes these inspirations:

With jugglers in velvety peaked caps, circles of drummers and guitarists, (...) and bright tie-dyed costumes. Their concerts were already imbued with nostalgia – for a populist aura of a time and space long ago. (...) their neomedievalism became a stand-in for nature, in the same way that Renaissance fairs, medieval sword-fight reenactments, and Dungeons and Dragons game groups provide an ideological, if temporary, haven from modern technological capitalism.<sup>53</sup>

This style, that bears reference to an idealised and fantastical past, contrasts with the consumerist and conformist society hippies did not wish to live in and that hippies wished to protest against. This link with the past, the Victorian Era, even the Middle Ages and a new mythical world leads me to the presentation of what is called the “hippie high costume”. This term is defined by Micah L. Issitt in *Hippies*, “A guide to an American Subculture”<sup>54</sup>:

From peace signs to body paint, hippie fashion was a decoupage of style, self-expression, and rebellion. At the “red carpets” of hip society, hippies wore “high costumes”, which included Victorian suits and dresses and military clothing worn with appropriate irony. The central goal was to use fashion to express the ideal of individuality.

This high costume was meant to be worn on special occasions, included a Victorian Era inspiration that we can see in the previous images and was meant to assert one’s identity. By wearing such clothes, Harold definitely chooses to step out from conventional U.S. society and to become a hip individual. He hence becomes officially eccentric because he lives in the margins of society with a hippie, as a hippie.

In *Hair* and *Woodstock*, the black community is represented as close to hippies. Indeed, the sixties is a period when black people fought for their rights, with the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power movement, and wished to assert their identity. Furthermore, their fight for

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<sup>52</sup> Yvonne Connikie, *Fashions of a Decade*, “The 1960s”, United States of America, Chelsea House Publishers, 2007, [1990], 56.

<sup>53</sup> Nadya Zimmerman, about Grateful Dead concerts in *Counterculture Kaleidoscope*, United States of America, The University of Michigan Press, 2008, 104-105.

<sup>54</sup> Micah L. Issitt, *Hippies*, “A guide to an American Subculture”, United States of America, Greenwood Press, 2009, 22.

recognition could also be felt in the way they dressed. Indeed, they began to wear their hair natural and to dress in an eccentric manner. This is what could link them to hippies.

Black nationalists in the 1960s were often visually identified by long, multicolored robes, loose fitting shirts called “dashikis”, Afro-inspired jewelry, and natural hair. The visual distinctiveness of these self-fashioning styles coincided with the overall political ideology of the Black Power movement (...) Afro hair and dress styles thus served as visual symbols of Black Power ideologies that promoted cultural separation and independence from whites.<sup>55</sup>

This eccentricity could be felt when they dressed in bright colours, special fabrics, with original clothes shapes, and when they wore big accessories and colourful glasses.



Figure 8: Sly Stone in *Woodstock* (Wadleigh, 1970)



Figure 9: Lafayette (standing on the left) and other black people, *Hair* (Forman, 1979)

In Figure 8, the artist Sly Stone, from the psychedelic rock group Sly and the Family Stone is performing at Woodstock. He wears a big chain necklace, big purple glasses, a white fringed satin shirt, fringed pants and a purple jacket. By dressing in this way, he stood out and acted as a model since he was famous. Here, the singer stands out and conveys an impression of singularity. Moreover, he was part of a group composed of both men and women, and of people from different origins, which means that this group was progressive since it was not common for people from different origins to go into partnership (the country had just put a system of segregation to an end and people still lived in different parts of cities depending on their origins and social classes). Black people were known at this time for dressing in an original and colourful way. Fashion helped them be recognised, as individuals. In *Hair*, Lafayette is a

<sup>55</sup> Betty Luther Hillman, *Dressing for the Culture Wars: style and the politics of self-representation in the 1960s and 1970s*, United States of America, University of Nebraska Press, 2015, 38.

member of the hippie group of friends (Figure 9). In this scene, his style contrasts with that of the white characters, who are wearing rather simple and natural toned clothes. Indeed, he, and the other black people on the image, are wearing more colourful and decorated clothes than the others. They are wearing silk, velvet, fringes, feathers, fur, and clothes with ethnic patterns. The only white person in this scene, who is wearing similarly eccentric clothes is Woof (Figure 10), but he is the only one. In this way, African Americans stand out. Moreover, in this scene, the characters sing two songs called “Colored Spade”, which deals with the skin colour of African Americans and their stigmatization, and “I’m Black, Ain’t Got No”, which promotes the acceptance of diversity. The eccentricity of the black community could thus be found in garments such as Sly’s and Lafayette’s, but also through their use of traditional, ethnic garments.



Figure 10: Woof wearing eccentric clothes like Lafayette, *Hair* (Forman, 1979)



Figure 11: A black woman at a party in a park, *Hair* (Forman, 1979)

In figure 11, a woman is wearing a blouse with an ethnic and colourful pattern. This garment seems to be an African traditional garment. The fact of wearing traditional garments allowed black people to assert their individuality, but also to claim their African heritage and to fight for their rights and recognition. Indeed, the development of the Black Pride and Black Power movements, led by groups such as the Black Panther Party, took place. The Black Power movement advocated for equality between white people and black people and for the assertion of the African American identity and social and political power<sup>56</sup>. It defended the African American heritage and culture and promoted an African American self-sufficiency through the “deconstruction of white power structures”<sup>57</sup>. Their cause was marked by the slogans “Black Power for Black People”, used by the political organization Lowndes County Freedom

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<sup>56</sup> Lakisha Odlum, “The Black Power Movement”, Primary Source Sets, Digital Public Library of America.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

Organization in 1965<sup>58</sup> and “we want Black Power”, which was repeated by Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Chairman Stokely Carmichael during the Meredith March against Fear in Mississippi in 1966<sup>59</sup>. This movement was embodied by figures such as Malcolm X<sup>60</sup> or Stokely Carmichael<sup>61</sup>, who dedicated their lives to the cause. Black people did not want to resemble people from the conformist white middle class society and wished to show their origins and own identity. In this way, it allowed and encouraged some to be eccentric. As the films of the corpus clearly show, the terms eccentricity and hippies were indivisible. Indeed, eccentricity was the main component of a hippie’s identity and way of dressing since hippies wished to stand out from society. However, in the very community that the hippies formed, some were more eccentric than others depending on the environment they evolved in (they could wear high costumes on special occasions), but also their state of mind (they could act as if they were performers in a mythical and theatrical world), or their ethnicity (they could use fashion as a means to assert their racial identity and belonging to the African-American community). Their use of fashion thus gave birth to a contestation that took place through the use of a multitude of more or less eccentric manifestations.

### **C) Exoticism and psychedelia: new world, new inspirations**

The creation of the hippie counterculture took place in a crucial period in the history both of the United States and of the world. Indeed, the 1960s and 1970s saw the evolution of transports allowing people to travel further, and more precisely to the East and the increasing use of drugs, notably LSD, which inspired parts of hippie fashion and added to its variety.

During this period, commercial airlines were created<sup>62</sup> and made the world accessible. Indeed, “As travel became cheaper, many young people took time out of study for the first time to discover India, Afghanistan, or Indonesia first hand, embarking on the “hippie trail” to the East.”<sup>63</sup> . Hippies were influenced by other cultures such as the Mexican<sup>64</sup> or Indian one, but because of this new access to the East, many people, and especially young people, travelled to

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<sup>58</sup> “Black Power”, African American Heritage, National Archives, The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, last reviewed on March 16, 2021.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> “The Foundations of Black Power”, National Museum of African American history & culture, Jul 5, 2019

<sup>62</sup> Hayden. Nancy, “What Influenced Fashion in the 70s?”, *Leaf.TV*, <https://www.leaf.tv/articles/what-influenced-fashion-in-the-70s/>, 15/05/22.

<sup>63</sup> Yvonne Connikie, *Fashions of a Decade*, “The 1960s”, United States of America, Chelsea House Publishers, 2007, [1990], 48.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* 50.

Asia and came back with new ideas, but also with objects or even clothes and accessories, as Yvonne Connickie quotes:

The culture of the East impressed the young to the extent that many began to adopt its religions, particularly Buddhism and the beliefs of the Hare Krishna sect—anti-materialist philosophies personified by monks draped in linen<sup>65</sup>

The youth Yvonne Connickie evokes includes hippies because they mostly were young people<sup>66</sup>. In the films under study, hippie characters – Harold in *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* and unknown hippies in *Hair* - are young people. Only Harold is older. Indeed, he is on the verge of getting married, has a job as a lawyer, and lives on his own. However, he seems to want to run away from this normalized adult life and its conventions such as weddings, which mark the entry of young adults into adulthood. Yvonne Connickie’s observation of the young thus matches to both of Harold’ and these people’s situations.



Figure 12: Harold listening to a man evoking oriental concepts, *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* (Averback, 1968)



Figure 13: People dressed in an Oriental manner in Claude’s imagination, *Hair* (Forman, 1979)

When Harold (Figure 12) is discussing philosophy with a more experienced hippie, both are wearing clothes that are inspired by Eastern traditions. Indeed, they are wearing Indian inspired tunics, draped cloths, beads and artefacts that are reminiscent of “monks draped in linen”. What also shows that they could have been inspired by the East is the subjects they discuss. Indeed, they are evoking a connection with nature and hatha yoga, which are practices that are linked to Eastern religions and philosophies. At this time of the film, Harold is supposed to be an actual

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 48

<sup>66</sup> Antonella Cagnolati, José Luis Hernández, Andrés Payà Rico, “Uprising! Searching for new subjectivities in the Sixties. Introduction”, *ESPACIO, TIEMPO Y EDUCACIÓN* Vol. 6, no. 1, January 2019, abstract, 1.

hippie. This choice to show him dressed like this when he is officially a hippie – he lives with one and adopted her lifestyle - suggests that there was a huge inspiration from the East in the hippie way of clothing. In *Hair*, when Claude takes drugs and hallucinates, he sees different characters. They are dressed in oriental clothes and stand on dramatic oriental scenes (Figure 13). Because this scene represents the main character taking drugs, which many hippies did at the time, and seeing characters in oriental clothes during his hallucinations, it highlights the importance of the Oriental influence on hippies. Even Hare Krishna is evoked in the song that is playing in this scene. This leads me to a point that I wish to make on drugs and psychedelia. Indeed, as their motto, which is “sex, drugs and rock and roll”<sup>67</sup> clearly suggests, the hippies were inspired by the things they could see and experience when they took drugs. In a sequence in *Woodstock* (Figure 14), hippies are shown taking drugs. The way the scene was edited emphasises the idea that it was a common practice and that it brought people together. Indeed, this scene shows a multitude of people smoking one after another in match on action shots. It is important to note that some of them did not take drugs, as a woman explains in the same film. Nevertheless, this inspiration from psychedelia could still be found in the way some of them dressed. As Micah L. Issitt says, this feature was expected from hippies by people from the mainstream:

They identified hippies by their choices in fashion, recreation, politics, and music. This is the definition that is still most commonly used—a culture of recreational drug use, antiwar protests, psychedelic rock music, and characteristic fashion trends like paisley-patterned clothing and tie-dyeing.<sup>68</sup>

In the film *Woodstock*, but also in the other films of the corpus, and more precisely *Psych-Out* with its hippie funeral scene, everything that is quoted by the author can be spotted, with people listening to psychedelic rock music, wearing military inspired clothes or peace signs, and tie-dyed or patterned colourful clothes.

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<sup>67</sup> These three ingredients of the hippie culture can be found in: Frédéric Robert. *La Révolution Hippie*, France, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011, 83.

<sup>68</sup> Micah L. Issitt, *Hippies*, “A guide to an American Subculture”, United States of America, Greenwood Press, 2009, 58.



Figure 14: People taking drugs, *Woodstock* (Wadleigh, 1970)



Figure 15: Stoney and Jenny making love, *Psych-Out* (Rush, 1968)

Since their lifestyle was linked to the consumption of drugs and free love<sup>69</sup>, it led them to wear comfortable clothes<sup>70</sup> in order not to be hindered by them when taking drugs or to wear clothes that did not match just because they felt that they were drawn towards them and wanted to wear them<sup>71</sup>, when they were under the influence of drugs for instance. Indeed, “they set the seal on the “anything goes” attitude, which had been building in force for some time, happily mixing up ethnic and psychedelic influences.”<sup>72</sup>. Every hippie in the films under study wears loose clothes. In image 14, people are wearing either a loose shirt or just a pair of shorts. They thus are wearing something comfortable while taking drugs. Besides this notion of comfort, the artistic influence of psychedelic effects is even represented in the film *Psych-Out*, when Jenny and Stoney are making love (Figure 15). Indeed, psychedelic patterns are projected on their nude bodies, and mirror effects are used, suggesting the effects of drugs on one’s perception.



Figure 16: A woman surrounded by colourful hippies, *Hair* (Forman, 1979)

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<sup>69</sup> Hayden. Nancy, “What Influenced Fashion in the 70s?”, *Leaf.TV*, <https://www.leaf.tv/articles/what-influenced-fashion-in-the-70s/>, 15/05/22.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Frédéric Robert, *La Révolution Hippie*, France, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011, 68.

<sup>72</sup> Yvonne Connikie. *Fashions of a Decade*, “The 1960s”, United States of America, Chelsea House Publishers, 2007, 23.



Moreover, some hippies wore tie and dyed clothes or colourful clothes, which were, for some, inspired by psychedelia<sup>73</sup> (Figure 16). In this image, the woman in the middle of the shot is surrounded by a rainbow of fabrics. The hippies were hence influenced by diverse sources such as exoticism and psychedelia. Indeed, they mixed and matched clothes and accessories which were comfortable to them, inspired them, and reminded them of their psychedelic experience. This way of dressing, amongst others, allowed them to stand out from the society of the time and to distance themselves from the American Dream and this is well represented in every film of the corpus.

#### D) Reinterpreting history

Finally, hippies also reinterpreted American history and the American past when dressing. It was another way of contesting society through fashion for them.

Because they wished to stand out from society, they subverted these American symbols or gave them new interpretations, as Antonella Cagnolati, José Luis Hernández Huerta and Andrés Payà Rico say,

This gave rise to an alternative culture with a loud dissonant voice - a libertarian paradigm whose aim was to demolish the old, obsolete and rigid codes of behaviours and create a *Weltanschauung* that would be better adapted to the baby-boomer generation<sup>74</sup>

Their clothes and their appearance gave them the power to create a new American culture. They wished to create a *Weltanschauung* – a new conception of the world<sup>75</sup> - which was different from the dominant one at the time. The young generation saw this dominant society as composed of “selfish values centred around the Western white man”<sup>76</sup>. Indeed, the “western white man” can be interpreted as any type of white man living or participating in a consumer society that spread through symbols. This is why some hippies wore American flag inspired symbols, like the man in *Woodstock* (Figure 17).

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<sup>73</sup> Barry Miles, *Hippie*, translated by Denis Montagnon, France, Hachette, 2004, 18.

<sup>74</sup> Antonella Cagnolati, José Luis Hernández Huerta, Andrés Payà Rico, “Uprising! Searching for new subjectivities in the Sixties”. Introduction. *ESPACIO, TIEMPO Y EDUCACIÓN*, 6 (1), January 2019, abstract, 1.

<sup>75</sup> From the definition of *Weltanschauung* in Oxford Reference.

<sup>76</sup> Antonella Cagnolati, José Luis Hernández Huerta, Andrés Payà Rico. “Uprising! Searching for new subjectivities in the Sixties”. Introduction. *ESPACIO, TIEMPO Y EDUCACIÓN*, 6 (1), January 2019, 3.



Figure 17: A man wearing an overall with the American symbol, *Woodstock* (Wadleigh, 1970)



Figure 18: A man wearing a war helmet, *Woodstock* (Wadleigh, 1970)



Figure 19: A woman dressed like a cowboy, *Psych-Out* (Rush, 1968)

This man is wearing an overall displaying an American state flag. This evokes the overalls that were worn in the U.S. army or air force. However, he is also holding what seems to be a Native American tambourine-like instrument. By wearing an U.S. symbol together with a Native American inspired instrument, this man wanted to match the two identities and cultures together, physically, and metaphorically. Besides, the hippies generally rejected symbols linked to the American Dream<sup>77</sup> and, as I demonstrated before, were inspired by the Native American culture, way of dressing and political cause. As the man in Figure 18 shows, others wore military inspired clothes and accessories. They wore “green or camouflage army jackets and pants”<sup>78</sup> for instance, as Nancy Hayden quotes. They did this to show that they stood against the Vietnam War, which was led by the country at the time<sup>79</sup>. The man in Figure 18 is wearing a war helmet together with light clothes (Figure 18). This man displays a clear contrast between his bare chest, his light flared pants showing vulnerability, and the war helmet he wears, which is supposed to protect the one who wears it. This use of a war helmet, or clothes that they salvaged from army surplus, comes from the fact that hippies reused old clothes, that they mixed and matched different inspirations, or from the very fact that they wanted to convey a message of peace. In figure 19, the woman is wearing a cowboy inspired hat and jacket. A great number of hippies wore cowboy clothes and attributes. It was because a great number of them lived in the countryside and because they inherited this style from the place they lived in and its traditions. Indeed, *Woodstock* shows them in the countryside, and in fields. It is also because they were turned towards a more traditional way of life after Nixon’s election, the decline of

<sup>77</sup> Barry Miles, *Hippie*, translated by Denis Montagnon, France, Hachette, 2004, 9.

<sup>78</sup> Nancy Hayden. “What influenced Fashion in the 70s?”. *Leaf.TV*, <https://www.leaf.tv/articles/what-influenced-fashion-in-the-70s/>, 15/05/22.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

the New Left and of the rock and roll counterculture radicalism of the sixties<sup>80</sup>. It coincides with the date when the festival took place. However, it also has consisted in a subversion or rewriting of the American history, since:

Cowboys and rodeo are quintessentially American; they represent the forces of the westward movement, Manifest Destiny, and the civilizing of the North American West. Thus, for some radical 1960s anti-American perspectives, rodeo cowboys, like cowboys might possibly represent American Imperialism, cultural genocide and other unsavory aspects of westward expansion.<sup>81</sup>

Michael Allen evokes a “anti-American perspective”. The hippies, who protested capitalism, the consumer society and the American Dream, have thus a sort of “anti-American perspective”. They thus have chosen to subvert the image of the cowboy by wearing his clothes and attributes while manifesting their hippie identity and way of life. Moreover, some cowboys were prejudiced against hippies and did not appreciate being compared to them, as Chris LeDoux did. He was disgusted by a hippie as he says in his song “The Cowboy and the Hippie”, “the cowboy is initially repulsed by this ‘long haired freak’”, that he identified as a “disgrace to the human race”<sup>82</sup>. Nevertheless, Michael Allen demonstrates that “Cowboys and ‘Hippies’ are not as different as one might think”<sup>83</sup> as the two of them have a “free, wandering lifestyle”<sup>84</sup>, as Chris LeDoux mentions. The image of the free and nomad hippie can be found in the films under study. Indeed, in *Psych-Out*, the hippies are living in a shared house, coming, and leaving as they wish, in *Woodstock*, people are coming to the festival with only their cars and little if not any luggage and then live on a muddy field together, and in *Hair* and a part of *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!*, they live in the streets or in their car. All these representations showed and spread the image of the free wandering hippies, thus resembling cowboys to some extent. It is even possible that hippies inspired cowboys, who “wore their hair long and had sideburns”<sup>85</sup>. The hippies and the cowboys hence seem to have shared common values (this has to be nuanced, since the Cowboy Code<sup>86</sup>, invokes loyalty and individualism for instance) and to have inspired

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<sup>80</sup> Michael, Allen, “I Just Want to be a Cosmic Cowboy”: Hippies, Cowboy Code, and the Culture of a Counterculture, *Western Historical Quarterly* Vol. 36, No. 3, United States of America, Oxford University Press, Autumn 2005, 281-282.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 276.

<sup>86</sup> “This code contained many features that resemble the unique characteristics ascribed to American frontiersmen by historian Frederick Jackson Turner in his seminal 1893 essay “The Significance of the Frontier in American

each other. An inspiration from the cowboy imagery can be found in the introduction to the film *Woodstock*. Indeed, in this introductory scene, showing the building of the structures of the festival, hippies are shown galloping on a horse, with almost no harness.



Figure 20: A man and a woman riding a horse, *Woodstock* (Wadleigh, 1970)



Figure 21: A man and a woman riding a horse, *Woodstock* (Wadleigh, 1970)

They are bare chested and are wearing cowboy hats. These images were chosen to be the opening of the film and were the first images the audience was to see as a sort of presentation of the festival and its goers. This representation of the hippies as close to nature and animals, as free and even close to traditional cowboys is interesting. It was a way for them to subvert an important symbol of the history of America and provoke the dominant society by revisiting and reinterpreting an important symbol of the Frontier and thus of the American history. These scenes can thus be seen as a form of provocation. They also have been created to display an idealised past, which was created by this counterculture that wished to create a better society out of diverse inspirations after a wave of radicalism in the New Left and other political movements.

The hippie counterculture, unlike the New Left, was imbued with a near-Jeffersonian vision of an agrarian republic – hence the anti-industrialism of the “commune movement”, long hair, buckskin, slouched leather and felt hats, leather boots, Indian moccasins and beads, bandanas, the Whole Earth Catalogue and Foxfire books and all of the other “natural” trappings of hippieana. The predominant counterculture vision then - that of a “greening of America” – was a vision of arcadia that could quite easily be ascribed into a variant of the Cowboy Code<sup>87</sup>

By dressing as cowboys, hippies wanted to show that a return to basics, to nature and wanderlust was needed in order to cure society from the endless consumerism and rising capitalism. Their

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History. The fundamental tenets of the code encompassed qualities of wanderlust, love of nature, strength, courage, adaptability, loyalty, stoicism, individualism, egalitarianism, and independence”, *Ibid.*, 276-277.

<sup>87</sup> Michael, Allen, “I Just Want to be a Cosmic Cowboy”: Hippies, Cowboy Code, and the Culture of a Counterculture, *Western Historical Quarterly* Vol. 36, No. 3, United States of America, Oxford University Press, Autumn 2005, 279-280.

wish to be represented in this way, wearing American symbols that they reused and salvaged from diverse sources could hence be interpreted as a provocation, but also, as a deeper intention to change the way the society they lived in functioned. Now that I have demonstrated, through an examination of the representations of hippies in the films under study, that different hippie styles existed and that their various styles allowed them to be identified as part of the hippie movement and contestation, the subject of the actual link between their clothes and their beliefs remains. Indeed, the films provide a panel of hippie styles, spreading their image and providing models to follow, but the question of how their clothes could have had such power, and how their reflection of a hippie state of mind and hippie ideas are conveyed to the audience of the films of the corpus is one that I am going to discuss now.

## **II. Contesting the mainstream: fashion and ideas**

Hippies were known for their various styles, but they also shared common features, such as the fact that their clothes allowed them to stand out from the dominant American culture. Style and fashion thus reflected their values and had a transformative power. Indeed, in the films, the evolution and the change of beliefs and values of the main characters are shown through an evolution in their costumes. This transformation brings hippies together and allows them to create a sharp contrast between their way of dressing and the way people from the dominant culture dressed. It also developed a new way of seeing fashion for both people from the mainstream and American businesses from the fashion industry. The new approach to fashion adopted by the dominant culture, which is reflected in the films under study, led to the building of a tension between the fact that hippies wished to reject consumerism and the fact that they were possibly part of it.

### **A) Transformative styles: fashion as the extension of the hippie self**

Hippies were attached to their clothes. Indeed, they reflected their values and thus had a transformative power, as Timothy Miller says, “Long hair, beards, no bras and freaky clothes represent a break from Prison Amerika.”<sup>88</sup> The more hippies broke with fashion rules of the dominant society, the hipper they were. It can be seen in the films where the main characters, who originally belong to the dominant American culture evolve as they interact with the hippie community.

In *Hair*, Shella, who belongs to an upper-middle class family, meets hippies. In the beginning of the film, when she meets them for the first time at a banquet organised for her birthday, she is wearing a ballgown. There, everyone is wearing elegant and expensive clothes.

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<sup>88</sup> Timothy Miller, *The Hippies and American Values*, Knoxville, The University of Tennessee Press, first edition 1991, 2011, 98.



Figure 22: Shella smoking with her friends at her birthday party, *Hair* (Forman, 1979)



Figure 23: Berger arriving at Shella's party and contrasting with the elegantly dressed crowd, *Hair* (Forman, 1979)

In Figure 22, Shella and her friends are wearing white ballgowns and have their hair perfectly done. However, they are smoking and hiding from Shella's parents. It foreshadows her befriending hippies later in the film since she rebels against her parents' authority right at the beginning of the film. Besides, there is a parallel here between Shella and the hippies. Indeed, she is shown hiding to smoke in an elegant white attire reminiscent of purity. It highlights a sharp contrast. And just before, the hippies are shown arriving at the banquet dressed in hippie fashion, which underlines a sharp contrast with the elegantly dressed crowd (Figure 23). She seems interested in the hippies during this banquet and then interacts with them throughout the film.

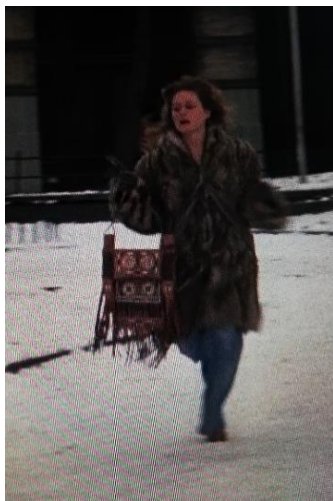


Figure 24: Shella wearing hippie inspired items in the middle of the film, *Hair* (Forman, 1979)



Figure 25: Shella wearing hippie items at the end of the film, *Hair* (Forman, 1979)

Her clothes then evolve as the film progresses. Indeed, the first time that she meets the hippies, she is wearing a white ballgown, her hair done in a sophisticated bun with expensive jewellery.

Throughout the film, she wears more and more comfortable clothes, with her hair loose and Native American inspired jewellery. Indeed, in the middle of the film, she is shown wearing a fur coat with flared jeans and ethnic accessories such as beaded earrings and a Native American inspired shoulder bag (Figure 24), and at the end of the film, she is wearing a grey jacket and brown t-shirt together with a pair of straight legged jeans and the same Native-American inspired bag (Figure 25). What is important to mention is that she does not live with the hippies. She just meets them sometimes as her friends. It can be felt in the way she dresses since she always wears a more sophisticated or neutral item, such as her grey blazer at the end of the film, indicating that she belongs to the dominant society, with hippie inspired accessories or items, showing her friendship with them. It is precisely after her night at the lake with the hippies that she starts to incorporate hippie items to her styles. Indeed, they decide to swim in a lake at night together after they partied in a park. They all take off their clothes to do so. Hippies are not afraid of nudity, as I demonstrated before. Nonetheless, Shella is not a hippie, and she realises that she must do the same if she wants to swim with the hippies that are Claude's friends. Claude is not a hippie either, but he has taken drugs just before, and likes the group of hippies, so he is not bothered by the fact of undressing. Plus, he is a man when Shella is a woman. Her body is therefore more likely to be sexualised in the dominant culture that she lives in, and it can explain why it takes her some time to do it and dare to show her body to people she does not know well.



Figure 26: Shella wears a grey suit with a white blouse before she undresses at the lake, *Hair* (Forman, 1979)



Figure 27: Shella has undressed at the lake, *Hair* (Forman, 1979)

However, she finally undresses and swims in the lake. This scene marks the beginning of her inclusion in the group, even if her clothes are stolen by Jeannie and she must go home without her clothes on, which makes her angry. Just before she undresses, she is wearing a white blouse with a sophisticated pant suit and her hair brushed out (Figure 26). But then, she is shown almost



naked with unkempt hair and surrounded by nature and clothes lying on the ground in a long shot, showing her step towards a natural version of herself (Figure 27). In the next scene, she is wearing the clothes shown in Figure 24. This passage is thus a key passage in the film, in her transformation and in the evolution of her beliefs as a friend of hippies. Shella is thus an example of how being in contact with hippies and hippie values can show in the way people dress, even if they still belong to the dominant society. As she already has a rebellious character, she finds common points with them, agrees to do unexpected things with them and finally shows it in her physical appearance.

Some people that seem to come from the dominant culture could also totally change their lifestyle to live with hippies and adopt their lifestyle, ideas and values. It is notably the case for Jenny in *Psych-Out*.



Figure 28: Jenny at the beginning of *Psych-Out* (Rush, 1968)



Figure 29: Jenny at the beginning of *Psych-Out* (Rush, 1968)



Figure 30: Jenny in the middle of *Psych-Out*, (Rush, 1968)



Figure 31: Jenny at the end of *Psych-Out* (Rush, 1968)

In the film, Jenny meets hippies when she arrives in San Francisco to find her brother (Figure 28). When she arrives, she is dressed in a simple and neutral manner in terms of shape and colours. She wears a polka-dotted navy-blue dress, a brown purse and black heels. She also has her hair brushed out. Her luggage even matches her dress. However, as she evolves within the hippie community that welcomes her, her style changes. The first clothes that she gets with the hippies are a yellow embroidered dress and a Native American ethnic necklace (Figure 29). When she decides to wear this look, she also wears pigtails. This hairstyle makes her look funnier. Besides, her style here is more casual since she is not wearing a shirt inspired dark dress but a loose and colourful one. She also includes Native American inspired jewellery to her look, which is a characteristic of hippie clothing. As the film continues, she is shown wearing a loose embroidered dress with a floral pattern and a pigtail on the top of her head to go to a hippie funeral (Figure 30). She evolves through different hippie styles. Indeed, she first wears a bright ethnic outfit, then a loose, and patterned froufrou dress. Finally, her last style in the film (Figure 31) is composed of a purple velvet dress, long beaded necklaces and her hair long with flowers in it. This final look shows her in what could be interpreted as her high costume as a hippie. Indeed, she is at a party where everyone is dressed in bright colours, extravagant patterns, and shapes of clothes. In this scene, she is shown in a high angle shot as she is amazed by Stoney's rock group performance. They are wearing extravagant clothes as well and are lit by psychedelic colourful visual effects. At this point, she has thus seen the different facets of a hippie's life and seems to have been included in their community. Plus, it is in this look that she takes drugs for the first time. This practice was often linked to hippies at

the time, notably because of their motto, “sex, drugs and rock and roll”. Her style has thus evolved at the same time as her status and shows an evolution in her lifestyle and mind. Indeed, she has now understood that hippies’ funerals were joyful, that they drove “freaky” cars, that they lived together, and played music in groups and at parties. Because she stays with them, even if at a point she seems to have a hard time doing so, it shows that she has accepted that she appreciates them and feels that she belongs with them at the same time as it shows that they promoted inclusion. Indeed, they welcomed her in their community as soon as they met her. Thanks to these examples of Shella and Jenny, we can see that clothes have a transformative effect. Fashion has the power to mark the belonging of someone to a group.

### **B) Differing looks: hippie versus mainstream**

It is because of the transformative power of clothes that the hippies were different from people who considered themselves as part of the dominant culture. Indeed, they wanted to physically show their difference. They had to be “scandalous-looking”<sup>89</sup> in order to show that, according to them, the dominant culture “had problems that needed solutions”<sup>90</sup>. In other words, they needed to break sharply with the dominant culture in terms of lifestyle and appearance to be seen and to be listened to.

This phenomenon is seen in every film under study, but the issue of the difference between hippies and people from the dominant culture is tackled in scenes from *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* and *Psych-Out*.

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<sup>89</sup> Kertakova Marija, Jordeva Sonja, Mojsov Kiro, “Fashion during the 20th century post-war periods”, *Tekstilna industrija*, Borj 2019, 35.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*



Figure 32: Hippies surrounded by people from the dominant culture at a landfill site, *Psych-Out* (Rush, 1968)

In this scene from *Psych-Out*, Jenny, Stoney and other hippies are looking for Jenny's brother in a landfill site. They finally find a car that looks like a hippie car since it is decorated with flowers and hippie culture related words, such as "love". However, they meet people who work in this landfill site, and who belong to the mainstream, with an aggressive and mocking attitude towards the hippies, saying that they cause problems. They also all have short hair, which is a sign that they are not hippies since a lot of hippie men wore their hair long. The man on the right (Figure 32) even jumps on the car, damaging its rooftop. They call hippies "funny people" as soon as they see them and mock their long hair and ethnic necklaces. This shows that the identity of the hippies was partly constructed through the way they dressed. This is what made them recognizable. In this scene, people from the mainstream are dressed in jeans, and simple T-Shirts or sports jackets. Because of that, and because of their job at the landfill site, they probably come from the American working class. I demonstrated before that the hippies could wear simple, casual and non-colourful clothes, but here the most coloured hippie has been put in the middle of the long shot with people from the mainstream all around him. He is sporting long hair, is wearing an orange shirt, with an ethnic patterned jacket and an ethnic handmade necklace and thus contrasts with the others, who do not stand out because they are wearing dark or faded colours. The organization of this shot visually translates the way hippies wanted to show that they were singular and different from people from the mainstream. Here, the hippie is right in the middle of the shot, standing out, just like the hippie car, surrounded by vehicles and people who blend in since they are wearing the same faded colours as those the "normal" cars are painted with. Just after this scene, the men working in the landfill site (Figure 32) are shown trying to intimidate and fight the hippies. This scene thus shows the difference between

hippies and people from the mainstream and shows that their relationship can be rather aggressive.



Figure 33: Harold's brother wearing a Hopi attire at a funeral, *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* (Averback, 1968)



Figure 34: Harold's brother wearing a Hopi attire at a funeral, *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* (Averback, 1968)

In *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!*, the same issue is tackled when Harold goes to a funeral with his hippie brother and his girlfriend named Nancy. People at the funeral come from an upper-middle class social background. Indeed, it is felt in the way they behave, and speak, but also in the way they dress. Women are wearing black funeral veil hats, with gloves and clothes made of noble material while men wear black suits. The colorimetry and lighting of the scene are rather dark. Indeed, everyone is wearing black. Figures 33 and 34 follow each other in this scene. They show the vision that Harold's parents have of the hippies from the front row, and then the vision that the hippies have of the parents from their bench. In the shot showing the parents, they get up and are filmed in a low-angle shot, showing feelings of surprise and dismay when they step back. The low-angle shot also provides an idea of superiority of people from the dominant culture over the hippies. Both images show the hippies with neutral or smiling faces and people from the dominant culture looking at them with horrified faces. The hippies thus stand out. Nancy is wearing a coloured, fringed, and patterned short dress with sandals and her hair long. She has no hat and no hair dress. Harold's brother is wearing a Hopi attire that this Native American tribe used to wear for funerals. This is the argument he gives when he tries to explain why he is not dressed like anyone else. This Hopi attire is composed of light brown coloured clothes, an ethnic patterned embroidered leather jacket, moccasins, ethnic beaded necklaces and a large brown headband. He is also wearing his hair longer than the other men, and his beard is not shaved. Besides, his attire is showing a lot of skin, whereas everyone is fully covered in black. He is wearing clothes that are appropriate, according to him, and does not seem to understand why people from the dominant culture, even if they are his parents, are

shocked. Indeed, some hippies were highly inspired by the Native American culture. However, this culture was not considered as mainstream at the time. In the mainstream American culture, one should wear black for funerals since it is the colour for mourning. Otherwise, one can be considered as disrespectful.

Nevertheless, cultures have different correlations between colours and their meaning, but also different interpretations of life events such as one's death. This difference in people's cultural reactions to death can also be seen in a scene of *Psych-Out* when a hippie dies from an overdose. Hippies then dance at his funeral. In *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!*, Nancy keeps smiling during the funeral while everyone else is crying. The contrast between the two points of view on death is thus presented in these two films. It underlines the pressure of the mainstream codes on the way people dress for mainstream special events. In *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!*, Harold, who will fall in love with Nancy and become a hippie later in the film is nonetheless shocked by his brother's attire. At this moment, he partakes of the dominant culture, even if he seems to accept his brother's lifestyle and shows that he loves him – he hugs him and spends time with him. The context of funerals, which is an emotional context, adds to the shock that is experienced by people from the mainstream in this scene. Harold's mother thinks that her son has lost his mind because of LSD and cries when she sees him. The mainstream considered hippies as disrespectful rebels, as people who became crazy and transformed into “freaks” by totally rejecting the codes of the dominant culture. Antonella Cagnolati, José Luis Hernández Huerta and Andrés Payà Rico say in the introduction to their article entitled “Uprising! Searching for new subjectivities in the Sixties” that because of the media, the public, that is to say, the dominant culture, viewed the youth and hippies as “unkempt, without ideals” and “destined for failure” and “social marginalisation”<sup>91</sup>. The attitude of people from the mainstream can nonetheless be questioned since it is their reaction that could have troubled the ceremony the most. Indeed, the hippies remain calm from the time they arrive to the end of the ceremony while the others stand up, cry and shout when they see them.

Nonetheless, the relationship between people from the mainstream culture and the hippies was not always aggressive or tensed. Indeed, in *Woodstock*, a man is shown defending the festivalgoers and wishing them fun, when another man tries to denigrate them. The owner

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<sup>91</sup> Antonella Cagnolati, José Luis Hernández Huerta, Andrés Payà Rico, “Uprising! Searching for new subjectivities in the Sixties”. Introduction. *ESPACIO, TIEMPO Y EDUCACIÓN*, 6 (1), January 2019, 3.

of the farm, who lent his field to the organisers of the festival to bring it to life even addressed the festival goers and made the peace sign with his fingers, as a sign of support.



Figure 35: the owner of the field where the festival was organised addressing the festivalgoers and making the peace sign with his fingers, *Woodstock* (Wadleigh, 1970)

These scenes thus illustrate the contrast that was marked between the appearance of people from the dominant culture of the time and the hippies, who stood out from this mainstream culture and its codes. They managed to create a new identity and a counterculture through the way they dressed. It allowed them to contest these codes and promote theirs. However, this contrast also led them to face aggressivity or rejection from other people. Nevertheless, they were also supported by people from the dominant culture, that did not always react aggressively or strongly rejected their presence. Fashion hence has the power to mark contrasts between different social categories in a society and to arouse reactions, such as the one from the dominant culture towards the hippie culture. The counterculture and hippies asserting their own codes and cultures and rejecting the dominant culture through fashion raises the question of their relationship with the dominant culture that they avoided. Indeed, they rejected the conformity and capitalism of the dominant culture. But one can wonder if it was possible for them to remain out of the mainstream and to what extent they were actually part of this capitalistic dominant culture.

### C) Paradoxically (un)conventional: the outcome of the hippie contestation

The hippies wished to live outside the mainstream culture. To do so, they lived and dressed differently. I have mentioned different styles that they had and showed that they did not want to belong to one in particular, but to wear what they wanted to wear even if it did not fit together as a well-balanced outfit or was accepted by people from the mainstream. Hippies just wore what they wanted to wear on the moment and did not follow the rules that were created by fashion designers or businesses, who had created trends, concerning clothes or lifestyles, that had to be scrupulously followed. However, one can wonder if the hippies participated in the American capitalism or consumerism.

Indeed, if one takes into consideration the fact that the hippie movement became very popular, and that a lot of people joined hippie communes or started to adopt a hippie lifestyle<sup>92</sup>, it must have interested the fashion industry. During the post-war period, the youth, that constituted a major part of hippies, had already become a new marketing target for businesses<sup>93</sup>. And in the late 1960s, "the psychedelic years saw the birth of a generation eager for nice clothes"<sup>94</sup>. The hippie movement was covered by magazines and became more "commercial and superficial"<sup>95</sup>. As Barry Miles quotes in *Hippie*, "in every city that had a university, there was at least one shop where people could buy hippie posters, cigarette paper or underground press"<sup>96</sup>. This phenomenon is to be seen in the introductory scene of *Psych-Out* when Jenny arrives in Haight Ashbury. It depicts the place where the film will take place, the population that will be present throughout the film - hippies -, and symbols related to them. The main theme and the setting of the film are thus introduced while there is also a characterization of both the main character, who is presented as curious, and of the hippies, with whom she will live in the film.

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<sup>92</sup> Barry Miles, *Hippie*, translated by Denis Montagnon, France, Hachette, 2004, 268.

<sup>93</sup> Marie Plassart, *La contre-culture américaine : années 1960, révoltes et utopies*, Neuilly, Atlande, 2011, 36

<sup>94</sup> Translated quote by Christopher Gibbs in Barry Miles, *Hippie*, translated by Denis Montagnon, France, Hachette, 2004, 255.

<sup>95</sup> Barry Miles, *Hippie*, translated by Denis Montagnon, France, Hachette, 2004, 268.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*



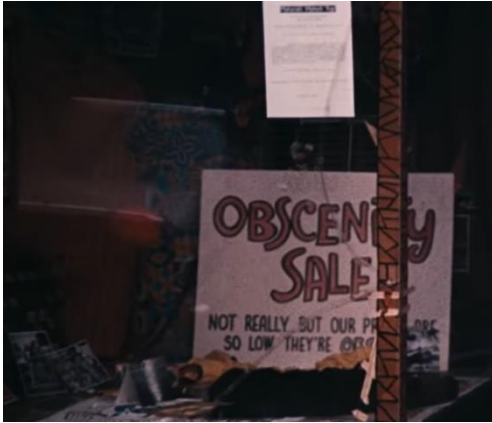


Figure 36: close up of a shop window in Haight Ashbury, *Psych-Out* (Rush, 1968)



Figure 37: close-up on the cover of *The San Francisco Oracle*, in Haight Ashbury, *Psych-Out* (Rush, 1968)

In this scene, crosscutting shows hippies meeting in a park and hippies smoking in the street. It also shows close ups of bare feet, which are a symbol of the hippie community, since being barefoot allowed them to be connected to the Earth, and cars with the inscription “love” and the peace symbol. It also includes a close up of a shop window displaying “obscenity sales” (Figure 35), of shop windows displaying adverts for cannabis, named “pot”, and the cover of *The San Francisco Oracle* (Figure 37), which was a hippie underground newspaper. This crosscutting thus introduces hippie symbols to the main character, who arrives in San Francisco to look for her brother, and to the audience watching the film. In this introduction, close ups of shop windows displaying underground press, rock star posters, and cannabis are shown. It thus illustrates what Barry Miles said about the presence of hippie related shops. These shop windows are decorated with colourful flowers, which are hippie symbols, and promote hippie items, but are still shop windows. The possibility that hippies owned shops raises the question of their participation in the consumer economy and capitalism. Haight Ashbury was both considered as the place where “the principal shapers of the San Francisco counterculture (...) in 1966 and 1967 wanted to promote an image of a unique, detached, and free community that was distinct from the mainstream, not against it”<sup>97</sup>, and as a place where hippie markets “blossomed”, alongside Sunset Strip in Los Angeles and Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley<sup>98</sup>, which is paradoxical. In *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!*, such a market is shown (Figure 38). Harold even calls it a “hippie supermarket”, where oriental music plays in the background. Hippie shops are also visible on the right, where the posters come from.

<sup>97</sup> Nadya Zimmerman, *Counterculture Kaleidoscope*, United States of America, The University of Michigan Press, 2008, 20.

<sup>98</sup> Barry Miles, *Hippie*, translated by Denis Montagnon, France, Hachette, 2004, 20.



Figure 38: A hippie market, *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* (Averback, 1968)

If the hippies sold the items that they handcrafted, second hand clothes, accessories, cannabis, or newspapers, as this scene shows, they still sold things, and thus participated in consumerism. As Nadya Zimmerman says, “The counterculture was engaged in consumerism – buying and selling – the main mode of action in a capitalist system”<sup>99</sup>. *Woodstock* also shows that the hippies sold and bought.



Figure 39: Panorama of the immense crowd of Woodstock, *Woodstock* (Wadleigh, 1970)



Figure 40: Panorama of the immense crowd of Woodstock, *Woodstock* (Wadleigh, 1970)

Indeed, in order to come to the Woodstock festival, they had to pay for tickets. If we take into consideration that this festival had an extraordinary success, and that it welcomed half a million of festival goers, it must have created profits. Besides, the artists, who performed at Woodstock had to be paid for their shows. Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix and other famous artists took part in the festival and were paid a huge amount of money for their performance<sup>100</sup>, because they were

<sup>99</sup> Nadya Zimmerman, *Counterculture Kaleidoscope*, United States of America, The University of Michigan Press, 2008, 18.

<sup>100</sup> Stephen Dowling, “50 facts about Woodstock at 50: Money”, *BBC*, 15th August 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20190813-50-facts-about-woodstock-at-50-money>, 24/05/22.

popular. The group Creedence Clearwater Revival earned \$10,000<sup>101</sup> for their performance<sup>102</sup>. The artists also accessed the stage by helicopter, which must have cost a lot of money. Concerning the hippie concerts, Nadya Zimmerman says that the concerts of Grateful Dead - one of the most important rock bands that played during the Summer of Love in San Francisco - “resembled a capitalist marketplace – offering music, handmade jewellery, and attire to buy and consume”<sup>103</sup>, showing their participation in a form of consumerism. Moreover, rock groups also had to choose between asserting their marginality or having contracts with record companies when rock and roll was a genre that was “aimed at people”<sup>104</sup> and that aimed to change the world<sup>104</sup>, which was what the hippies wished to do by living outside of the dominant culture and listening to rock and roll. This situation is thus also paradoxical. The fact that the hippies sold their creations, launched their own markets, paid to go to concerts or festivals such as the Woodstock festival shows that they participated somewhat in the economy of the country and that their culture and identity were linked to consumerism.

In the introductory scene of *Psych-Out*, Jenny is shown in a bus when she discovers Haight Ashbury. This leads me to another point concerning the link between hippies and consumerism. Indeed, the city of San Francisco, and the Haight Ashbury district became very popular because it concentrated a great number of hippies. Tourists thus began to visit this city just to see them. Micah L. Issitt says,

San Francisco and parts of Monterey had become caricatures of hippie culture. In Haight Ashbury, a tour company offered bus tours of the hippie hangouts and hundreds of new stores opened up to sell “hippie” clothing, music, and other paraphernalia.<sup>105</sup>

A new form of tourism was created with the popularization of the hippie lifestyle and culture in the media, and this tourism participated in the consumerism and capitalism of the time since it was organised by companies. Besides, because of this tourism, new shops opened, and the situation created a cycle involving tourism and shops. These shops, however, were opened by non-hippie business owners, as the quotation marks around “hippie”, in ““hippie” clothing”, in

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<sup>101</sup> It nearly equals \$69,000 in 2019 money (*Ibid.*)

<sup>102</sup> Stephen Dowling, “50 facts about Woodstock at 50: Money”, *BBC*, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2019, , <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20190813-50-facts-about-woodstock-at-50-money>, 24/05/22.

<sup>103</sup> Nadya Zimmerman, *Counterculture Kaleidoscope*, United States of America, The University of Michigan Press, 2008, 105.

<sup>104</sup> Barry Miles, *Hippie*, translated by Denis Montagnon, France, Hachette, 2004, 20.

<sup>105</sup> Micah L. Issitt, *Hippies*, “A guide to an American Subculture”, United States of America, Greenwood Press, 2009, 10.

the quote highlight. Indeed, “Tourists flocked to San Francisco’s Haight Ashbury neighbourhood to see these strange beings in sandals and caftans, handing out flowers as symbols of peace and love”<sup>106</sup>, and “thousands of tourists and drifters (Charles Manson included) came to experience the Haight-Ashbury district, but because they came as onlookers, they had no investment in the community that had been established here”<sup>107</sup>. The hippies thus participated in the economy of the country by selling objects<sup>108</sup>, but a major part of their participation was indirect and caused by curious people from the dominant culture and mainstream businesses. When Jenny walks in the streets, she sees hippies running in front of her and spiralling around people. It is almost showing them as objects on display as part of the setting. Businesses, record companies, and tourists created a new form of consumerism revolving around the success of the hippie culture and people’s curiosity towards it. This phenomenon was denounced during the “Death of the Hippie March”, that was organized by the Diggers – a counterculture anarchist group – in October 1967<sup>109</sup>. The Psychedelic Shop, which was one of the first hippie markets in Haight Ashbury even closed on this day<sup>110</sup>. With the support of the *Oracle*, they wished to mark “the death of the media generated hippie”<sup>111</sup>.

Concerning fashion specifically, I said that hippies sold their handcrafted clothes and accessories and second-hand clothes at markets or in small shops. In *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!*, Nancy works in a clothes shop.



Figure 41: Nancy and Harold in the shop Nancy works in, *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* (Averback, 1968)

<sup>106</sup> Yvonne Connikie, *Fashions of a Decade*, “The 1960s”, United States of America, Chelsea House Publishers, 2007, [1990], 56.

<sup>107</sup> Nadya Zimmerman, *Counterculture Kaleidoscope*, United States of America, The University of Michigan Press, 2008, 165.

<sup>108</sup> Frédéric Robert, *La Révolution Hippie*, France, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011, 72-73

<sup>109</sup> Micah L. Issitt, *Hippies*, “A guide to an American Subculture”, United States of America, Greenwood Press, 2009, 10.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Nadya Zimmerman, *Counterculture Kaleidoscope*, United States of America, The University of Michigan Press, 2008, 166.

When working in this shop, she wears her usual hippie clothes, and her colleague is shown wearing a bell sleeved blouse in brownish tones, a leather skirt and latex thigh boots. What they sell in this shop is colourful, beaded, and hippie inspired. Paper flowers can be seen in the background, as well as coloured feathers. Indeed, it is the shop where Harold chooses his first clothes as a hippie. It thus shows hippies participating in consumerism. However, people from the dominant culture also come and buy in this shop. A man, for instance comes to buy a dress. He tries on a bright pink dress, but still acts as a person from the mainstream, since he arrives in a suit, and seems not to want to communicate a lot with the hippie seller. Their shop thus did not only reach a hippie target, but also people from the dominant culture. It shows that hippies still belonged to the mainstream economy and participated in its consumerism. New districts of hippie shops resembling this shop or Haight Ashbury shops developed, for instance at the Fillmore Auditorium, where many underground shops opened<sup>112</sup>. Brands such as “Granny Takes a Trip” or “Hung on You” even opened in Britain, proving the success of the hippie lifestyle and fashion abroad<sup>113</sup>. These new shops sold second hand clothes, or clothes designed by hippies, but what also developed was hippie inspired mainstream and high fashion, as Yvonne Connickie notes,

Most people began to subscribe to the hippie ideal of “doing your own thing”, “the length of your skirt is how you feel this moment,” reported Vogue. The designers agreed, and the final collections of the sixties embraced the micro-skirt and the maxi, along with the compromise midi. Anti-fashion had triumphed in a roundabout way, and nothing would ever be quite the same again.<sup>114</sup>

It thus became mainstream to dress with hippie inspired clothes. This phenomenon appears in the film *Hair*, when people from the dominant culture – soldiers and women - sing a song about love. Three white women, and then three black women sing in a park, and are dressed in clothes reminiscent of the hippie style.

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<sup>112</sup> Barry Miles, *Hippie*, translated by Denis Montagnon, France, Hachette, 2004, 276.

<sup>113</sup> Christoph Grunenberg, Jonathan Harris, Jonathan P. Harris, *Summer of Love: Psychedelic Art, Social Crisis and Counterculture in the 1960s*, Liverpool University Press, 2005, 110.

<sup>114</sup> Yvonne Connickie, *Fashions of a Decade*, “The 1960s”, United States of America, Chelsea House Publishers, 2007, [1990], 58.



Figure 42: women from the dominant culture in a parc, *Hair* (Forman, 1979)



Figure 43: women from the dominant culture in a parc, *Hair* (Forman, 1979)

In the first image, the two women on the right are dressed in a rather classical way, in comparison to the woman on the left. However, the woman in the middle is wearing golden boots and a jacket that stands out from her look. The woman on the left is wearing boots with golden heels, a pair of mini shorts, a jacket and a peacock patterned loose blouse. On the second picture, the two women on the left are dressed in oriental patterned skirts. The woman on the left is also wearing a large, ornamented belt, and an oriental patterned jacket. The woman on the right is dressed in a rather simple manner. These looks are reminiscent of the looks that I presented in my typology of the hippies. They feature colourful and patterned, loose and fluid clothes. The fact that these scenes show gradations in the inspiration from the hippies, it proves that their looks inspired the dominant culture in different ways: from tiny details to an entire outfit. And because people from the mainstream culture began to incorporate hippie inspired clothes to their everyday outfit, designers and shops produced more and more clothes that were inspired by the hippies' way of dressing. Therefore, it became mainstream. Everyone began to let their hair grow as Yvonne Connickie explains. She also says that luxury designers and high fashion, were inspired by hippies,

Paris designers flung themselves into the new mood with enthusiasm. The hippies' cheap, flamboyant clothes were transformed into expensive designer wear embraced by the establishment. The ready-to-wear collections of January 1967 were full of oriental touches—striped djellabas, harem dresses, tent dresses, rajah coats, and Nehru jackets, all in fine wools and exotic silks.<sup>115</sup>

Because the clothes that are cited in this quotation are clearly inspired by hippie style, it shows the effect that their lifestyle and the way they dressed had on the world, and on consumerism.

<sup>115</sup> Yvonne Connickie, *Fashions of a Decade*, "The 1960s", United States of America, Chelsea House Publishers, 2007, [1990], 58.

Indeed, high fashion designers embody what the hippies rebelled against. They embody the consumerism and capitalism imposing norms on people from the dominant culture. However, they became inspired by a community that rejected them. Thomas Frank even says that the counterculture, to which the hippies belonged,

served corporate revolutionaries as a projection of the new ideology of business, a living embodiment of attitudes that reflected their own. In its hostility to established tastes, the counterculture seemed to be preparing young people to rebel against whatever they had patronized before and to view the cycles of the new without the suspicion of earlier eras<sup>116</sup>

The hippies thus prepared the youth, the new consumers, to accept trends that changed faster and faster. They helped to revolutionize the consumerism that could not “move beyond the conventions” that were set in the post-war years. Consumerism then entered the “permanent revolution”<sup>117</sup>. The hippies were thus at the centre of different paradoxes, starting from the fact that they wished to distance themselves from the dominant consumerist and conformist society, at the same time as they participated in this consumerism, directly or indirectly. The films of the corpus show that they shared common values that were reflected through the way they dressed and the way they lived and proved that clothes can have a transformative power. However, hippies also participated in what they rejected, in the consumerism and capitalism of the mainstream culture they wished to avoid, and it shows through the films under study. Indeed, these films depict hippie fashion as what both made them stand out and brought them back to what they initially rejected.

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<sup>116</sup> Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the rise of Hip Consumerism*, University of Chicago Press, 1998, 27.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

## Conclusion

To conclude, hippies were not just colourful and funny wandering beings: it was what they tried to prove when organizing the 1967 Human Be-In. The analysis that this paper made of *Hair*, *Psych-Out*, *Woodstock* and *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!*, argued that their culture, fashion and the contestation linked to them were complex. A great diversity of hippie styles developed during the 1960s. Each of them was linked to the concept of freedom. Hippies were also inspired by Native Americans, by the Black Power movement, by psychedelia and Eastern cultures. Indeed, some hippie styles emerged because of the context they lived in. It allowed them to be aware of problems of representations concerning the Native Americans and the African Americans, to travel across the world, which was nearly impossible before, and to metaphorically travel into their own subconscious with the use of new drugs. The hippie fashion that they created, is therefore a product of the evolution of the society they lived in and of this new access to the world.

Hippies contested by creating their *own* way of dressing. Fashion was an interesting medium for them to use because the process of dressing is inherently creative. As the films of the corpus point, fashion can be considered as a form of art. Besides, it is various and versatile. It corresponds to the hippie way of life, that promotes the “do your own thing”, meaning that hippies can do what they want the way they want. It includes the act of subverting the mainstream codes of fashion and history to put a counterculture and contestation in place. Moreover, fashion is a practical means of contestation since the way you dress corresponds to what you show to others, and it defines your personality. Each film presents fashion as a reflection of one’s identity, social background, interests, values and belonging to a group etc. At the time, dressing differently thus implemented a permanent contestation. In this regard, to walk in the streets or go to university dressed as a hippie were forms of contestation.

Because hippies were openly different, they marked a contrast with people from the mainstream and disturbed the society they rejected. People from the dominant culture resented them in the press or in the streets, as we have seen in *Psych-Out* when the hippies are in the landfill site or *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* when they are at a funeral or viewed them as rebels and were inspired by them, as *Hair* demonstrates with the character of Shella, and as *Psych-Out* highlights with Jenny falling in love with Stoney. The growing interest in the hippie culture that was reflected in the American culture of the time, even led to the entry of hippie fashion in the mainstream fashion industry and even in the high fashion industry. As this paper pointed out, hippies tried to stand out from the American society of the time, which was too capitalist



and conformist for them. This phenomenon is clearly present in each film under study. However, what is also revealed by details of these films is that hippies actually participated in its functioning. They sold their creations, then inspired more and more industries into creating derivative products, to finally view their fashion become mainstream and enter high fashion. The reception of hippie fashion thus went from the pariahs' way of dressing to the elaborate and original creations of famous high fashion designers such as Yves Saint Laurent<sup>118</sup>. They helped the American society evolve: their style and their ideas became more and more mainstream to finally become part of the dominant culture. After the hippie fashion blended in the mainstream when the movement slowly ended in the 1970s, the fashion industry kept being inspired by their style. Today, the bohemian or "hippie chic"<sup>119</sup> styles are still known. One can thus wonder if "the original hippies living in San Francisco in the mid-sixties could not have imagined that by the end of the decade, their crazy style of dressing would have become high fashion"<sup>120</sup> and mainstream.

The films of the corpus take different approaches to the hippie way of life. *Hair* and *Woodstock* are respectively a musical and a documentary. They provide rather positive images of hippies. *Hair* is full of songs promoting love and inclusiveness. It presents the hippies as endearing characters. Indeed, the audience becomes attached to them and the scene of Berger's death at the end of the film is moving. The film also has humorous undertones. Because of this and because it presents the heterogeneity of hippies and hippie styles while promoting diversity, this musical can be considered as a celebration of the hippie movement. On the other hand, *Woodstock* documents the way the festival was brought to life by its organizers and recorded each concert. The film also immerses the viewer into the lives of the hippie festival goers. It can be considered as a celebration of this event, which had a lot of success. Indeed, the negative parts of the event (such as "the lack of clean water, bathrooms, food, highway access, bathing, and sleeping facilities"<sup>121</sup>) are not really lingered over in this film, which mainly presents the positive aspects of the Woodstock festival and stands as a form of memorial of the event. At the time, people watched it to discover the festival and see what happened there, how people dressed and lived, or because they wanted to remember how it was as former festival goers. In

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<sup>118</sup> Yvonne Connikie, *Fashions of a Decade*, "The 1960s", United States of America, Chelsea House Publishers, 2007, [1990], 58.

<sup>119</sup> Kyle Roderick, "The Well-Dressed Hippie", *Los Angeles Times*, April 16, 1998.

<sup>120</sup> Yvonne Connikie, *Fashions of a Decade*, "The 1960s", United States of America, Chelsea House Publishers, 2007, [1990], 56.

<sup>121</sup> Russell Duncan, "The Summer of Love and Protest: Transatlantic Counterculture in the 1960s", in Grzegorz Kosci, Clara Junker, Sharon Monteith, Britta Waldschidt-Nelson, *The Transatlantic Sixties: Europe and the United States in the Counterculture Decade* Transcript Verlag, 2013, 165.

contrast, *Psych-Out* and *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* provide less positive images of the hippie culture. Indeed, *Psych-Out* focuses on a woman looking for her hippie brother in the city of San Francisco. Her brother is presented as a mysterious and strange character. Indeed, he has very long hair, a very long beard and wears a long white, but stained dress. He stands for the actual “freak”. Besides, a strong focus is made on drugs all along the film. It is also the case in *Hair*, which shows the characters smoking marijuana and taking LSD, but at the end of *Psych-Out*, when Jenny sports her hippie high costume and is found with Dave by Stoney, she takes drugs for the first time and has a bad reaction to them. The treatment of the use of drugs is thus not the same in those two films. In *Psych-Out*, Jenny gets lost in the city. She is finally saved by Dave, who gets hit by a car and dies. The film ends on an image of Jenny crying and a scene of hippies dancing at what seems to be a funeral. These two images of Jenny crying, and people wearing colours and dancing are disturbing since they provide a sense of deep sadness and happiness at the same time. Here, the reaction of Jenny, who recently arrived in the hippie community and comes from the dominant culture to Dave’s death is to cry, but a reminder of the hippie perception of death is provided by the colourfully dressed people dancing. *Psych-Out* thus raises awareness on the more negative elements of the hippie way of life and tackles darker themes such as the use of drugs. At the beginning, psychedelia is presented in a rather artistic manner, highlighting the beauty of the love Stoney and Jenny feel for each other, but finally ends up being a source of problems for the characters. The film shows the main character’s brother slowly losing his sense of reality and the main character taking risks and feeling guilty for the death of the one who saved her life. This film could thus be considered as a drugsploitation film since the outcome of the plot is based on them and the film seems to warn its audience of the problems the growing interest in psychedelic drugs could cause. *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* presents the hippies in an ambivalent light. Indeed, no frontal criticism is made of them in the film. However, Harold, who becomes a hippie, becomes a grotesque figure as the film evolves. Indeed, he becomes a hippie cliché. As we have seen before, an important place is also given to humour, which is self-reflexive, in *Hair*. But in *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!*, the humour is used for satirical purposes. As soon as he is a hippie, Harold’s hair brutally grows<sup>122</sup>. At one point, he even ends up throwing the ton of objects he accumulated in his car because he realizes that he cannot move in it anymore, but he wears an enormous fur coat. When people start to freely enter in their house and when Nancy says she loves another

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<sup>122</sup> Vincent Canby, “Screen: ‘I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!’: Peter Sellers Stars as Lawyer Turned Hippie”, *The New York Times*, October 8, 1968.

man, he gets angry and jealous, which contradict the idea of free love<sup>123</sup> that the hippies advocated. Finally, Nancy implies that he is not a “real hippie”, by telling him that he is “unhip”. After this scene, he leaves his hippie costume and goes back to the mainstream and to his suit. At the end of the film, he has a second chance in the dominant culture and can marry Joyce. However, he runs away again. He then runs in the streets and repeats “I don’t know” after a man asks him where he is going. This character thus embodies contradictions in some hippies’ way of life and dressing and their values. Besides, Harold is a man from the dominant culture, who becomes a hippie because he falls in love with a hippie woman, and because he is fed up with his life in the mainstream. The fact that he is presented as a grotesque and a cliché character, and that he seems to run away from everything at the end of the film presents him as someone who is lost. This film thus shows, through the grotesque and comic, that not everyone who claimed to be part of the hippie community and dressed as a hippie was really hippie, and maybe that these people were lost people, who did not agree with the dominant society of the time and found a sense of belonging in the hippie culture.

Contemporary films that represent hippies or hippie inspired characters follow the same line. Comedies mainly represent them as zen, positive and naïve travellers and sometimes lazy characters. *Our Idiot Brother*, released in 2011 and directed by Jesse Peretz represents a contemporary hippie whose name is Ned. Ned was sent to jail because he was arrested for drugs possession and comes back to his mainstream family. The hippie fashion heritage is present in the way he dresses since he wears simple casual clothes and even ethnic patterned pieces. What really makes him a hippie however is his long hair and beard, which contrast with the other man characters sporting short hair and shaved beards. The comedy shows him getting acclimated back to life out of prison after he arrived with his hiking bag. He is presented as a strange and even rather foolish character at first, as other characters say. *Meet The Fockers*, released in 2004 and directed by Jay Roach offers a similar representation of hippie inspired characters who are the members of the Focker family. They can be seen wearing oriental inspired loose coloured patterned clothes and accessories reminiscent of those of the 1960s hippies. They also have a lifestyle reminiscent of theirs since they are presented as zen, positive shameless characters. They thus are comical representations of new hippies. In *Taking Woodstock*, released in 2009 and directed by Ang Lee, 1960s hippies are represented in a rather comical and positive way too: they are positive, welcoming, and positively intriguing for the main character who decides to take the Woodstock festival to save his parent’s business. This

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

film even represents hippie fashion in a rather faithful way since the clothes of Michael Lang are the same as ones featured in *Woodstock* for instance. Other contemporary films nevertheless represent hippies in a less positive manner. Indeed, in *Into the Wild*, released in 2007 and directed by Sean Penn, the main character Christopher decides to leave the mainstream and to live into the wild, away from the American society and its codes and materialism. The ideas of this character are reminiscent of those of the hippies, who wished to live aside the American society because of its conformism and exaggerated consumerism and who wished to be close to nature. He leaves with simple clothes and the bare minimum. His hair and beard grow during the film, making a new hippie out of him. The end of the film nevertheless shows the character die because he poisoned himself with a plant. The film thus shows the limits and dangerousness of the hippie lifestyle. The same goes with *Forrest Gump*, released in 1994 and directed by Robert Zemeckis. The film represents 1960s hippies and Jenny, who becomes a hippie in the film, is presented as a traumatised woman, who ran away from her abusive father and becomes a suicidal abused drug addict before she finally comes back to the main character Forrest and marries him. In the contemporary era, two representations of hippies or hippie inspired characters stand out: comical, tragic and sometimes both. These two main representations of hippies hence are reminiscent of the two main categories of 1950s and 1960s rebellious teen movies A. Boutang and C. Sauvage underlined in *Les Teen Movies*: the biased and light ones and the frontal and violent ones. Hippies thus have a great posterity on film in the contemporary era and still inspire directors, who keep making films about them: to celebrate their movement or to show its limits.

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