



# “How Many Black Hippies Do You See?” The Counterculture in Black and White

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Historians have treated the counterculture largely as a white phenomenon and drawn sharp boundaries between its escapism and the political engagement of the Black freedom struggle. A look at the counterculture’s origins and growth in the late 1950s and the 1960s reveals that the counterculture intersected with Black culture in many ways. White beats, hipsters, and hippies generally admired the civil rights movement’s support for equality and nonviolence, but sometimes scoffed at its effort to gain integration into American society. Hippies considered themselves outsiders from society and imagined that they shared affinity with Black Americans. Blacks’ responses to the counterculture ranged from contempt to curiosity to embrace. Some Blacks despised the hippies’ lifestyle and political apathy, but others considered the counterculture an important challenge to “the System.” American culture, style, literature, and music were all affected by the counterculture’s experimentalism. The counterculture changed white culture, Black culture, and American culture. Drawing boundaries between cultural forms proves less instructive than focussing on the connections between them.

San Francisco’s Haight Street and New York’s East Village teemed with young people in the 1960s, offering a carnival of outlandish fashions and Day-Glo colors, but the throngs of hippies traipsing through the Haight were overwhelmingly white. As one Bay Area Black resident asked sarcastically, “How many black hippies do you see?”<sup>1</sup> Admittedly, not many. But tallying the small number of Black hippies does not explain the complex relationship between Black culture and the counterculture in the 1960s and early 1970s. Historians have also characterized the counterculture as a white thing; W. J. Rorabaugh notes the counterculture’s racial homogeneity, stating that 97 percent of hippies were white. Paradoxically, historians also assert that the overwhelmingly white counterculture ultimately drew its inspiration and rebelliousness from Black culture. Timothy Miller concedes that nearly all

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<sup>1</sup> “Commies versus Hippies,” *Berkeley Barb*, 2 June 1967, 7.

hippies were white, but adds, “Behind 1960s counterculture and its predecessor beat culture lay Black America.”<sup>2</sup>

That most hippies were white and that the counterculture’s roots lay in Black culture are both true, but a more searching look at the counterculture reveals that Blacks’ and whites’ responses to it were varied and complex.<sup>3</sup> While most hippies were white, the counterculture and the enormous changes in race relations in the decades after World War II were entwined. Beat and hipster culture in the 1950s and early 1960s coincided with the civil rights movement’s challenge to racial segregation and white supremacy. The hippie counterculture gained nationwide attention in 1967, a moment when Black Americans weighed the civil rights movement’s integrationism against Black nationalism. The vaunted Summer of Love was also the Long Hot Summer of 1967, when Black Americans rebelled in more than a hundred cities. Hope for interracial harmony was shattered, along with every storefront window in the Haight, when Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in April 1968.<sup>4</sup> As relations between white and Black Americans deteriorated and hopes for interracial solidarity waned in the late 1960s, the counterculture was recast as white in many Americans’ minds.

<sup>2</sup> Timothy Miller, *Hippies and American Values* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 6. W. J. Rorabaugh, *American Hippies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Stuart Hall, “The Hippies—An American ‘Moment’,” Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, SP 16(1968), [10]. See also John Anthony Moretta, *The Hippies: A 1960s History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2017); Damon R. Bach, *The American Counterculture: A History of Hippies and Cultural Dissidents* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2020); Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo, *Daughters of Aquarius: Women of the Sixties Counterculture* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009); Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle, eds., *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and ’70s* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Charles Perry, *The Haight Ashbury: A History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985); Barry Miles, *Hippie* (New York: Sterling Publishing Co., 2005); Arun Saldanha, *Psychedelic White: Goa Trance and the Viscosity of Race* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 11–20; Nadya Zimmerman, *Counterculture Kaleidoscope: Musical and Cultural Perspectives on Late Sixties San Francisco* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008); Robert C. Cottrell, *Sex, Drugs, and Rock ‘n’ Roll: The Rise of America’s 1960s Counterculture* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015); Rob Chapman, *Psychedelia and Other Colors* (New York: Faber & Faber, 2015); Sarah Hall, *San Francisco and the Long 60s* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016); John Robert Howard, “The Flowering of the Hippie Movement,” *AAAPS*, 382 (March 1969), 43–55. For pointed critiques of the counterculture see Warren Hinckle, “A Social History of the Hippies,” *Ramparts*, 5, 7 (March 1967), 5–26; Louis Menand, “Life in the Stone Age,” *New Republic*, 7 Jan. 1991, 38–44. For a colorful documentary about hippies see *Revolution*, dir. Jack O’Connell, Robert J. Leder Co. and Omicron Films, 1968.

<sup>3</sup> On the counterculture’s complexity and contradictions see Michael J. Kramer, *The Republic of Rock: Music and Citizenship in the Sixties Counterculture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 9–10; Braunstein and Doyle, 10; Howard Brick, *Age of Contradiction: American Thought and Culture in the 1960s*, reprint (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 114.

<sup>4</sup> Jerry Belcher, “Fear, Not Flowers,” *San Francisco Examiner*, 29 Sept. 1968, 3.

But the counterculture's sweeping goal of liberating Americans from conformity, materialism, and technocracy and the Black freedom struggle against racism invariably intersected in many ways.<sup>5</sup> The counterculture encompassed a wide spectrum of attitudes toward race relations, ranging from a utopian faith in universal brotherhood to apathy. White hippies generally admired the civil rights movement's commitment to nonviolence and equality, although some questioned its demand for integration into mainstream American society. Some were leery of the Black Panthers' talk of violent revolution yet rallied behind their uncompromising defiance of the System. Black Americans responded to the counterculture with a mixture of contempt, curiosity, and enthusiasm. Civil rights advocates and Black nationalists alike scoffed at the counterculture's political apathy, and at the call to drop out of society. Many scorned white hippies as poseurs playacting as rebels for a year or two before returning to the comforts of middle-class life, but some considered the counterculture's defiance of middle-class proprieties a serious challenge to the Establishment. While some Black thinkers attempted to draw sharp boundaries between Black culture and the counterculture, fashion, literature, and especially music were not easily confined. As historian Sherry Smith observes, "The social and political movements of the 1960s and 1970s were very much intercultural and interracial."<sup>6</sup>

## FROM THE COMBINE GENERATION TO THE COUNTERCULTURE

The counterculture did not suddenly emerge in 1967, but had origins in the economic, demographic, political, and cultural changes that remade the United States after World War II. Some young Americans chafed at conformity and materialism and rejected America's supposed Cold War "consensus." A new cultural sensibility coalesced in the 1950s and 1960s in San Francisco's North Beach and New York's Greenwich Village and East Village, which became magnets for hundreds, then thousands, of young people who identified themselves as beats or "hipsters," originally a slang term for jazz musicians that grew to encompass jazz fans, white and Black.<sup>7</sup> In these bohemian enclaves

<sup>5</sup> Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture* (Garden City, NY, 1969), xi–xiv, 1–41, 44, 73. Roszak conceded that most Black youths could not drop out of American society because they had not yet gained inclusion in it, but predicted that a growing Black middle class would ultimately "produce its own ungrateful young."

<sup>6</sup> Sherry Smith, *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2012), 13. On the exchange of white and Black youth culture and musical forms in Britain see Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen & Co., 1979), 46–49.

<sup>7</sup> Moretta, 7–31; Rorabaugh, 4–5, 15–48; Bach, *American Counterculture*, 1–36.

white and Black artists and activists combined to create a measure of interracial solidarity. Optimists dared to believe that the growing ties between white and Black youths indicated that Americans were beginning to redress their history of racial inequality.

Beats and hipsters admired Black culture as a vibrant alternative to the blandness of white middle-class life. Some beats and hipsters exoticized and romanticized Black culture, or at least their idea of it.<sup>8</sup> Norman Mailer's controversial 1957 essay "The White Negro" hailed Black men as America's ultimate outsiders and rebels. The white hipster somehow "absorbed the existentialist synapses" of Black Americans, transforming himself into a "white Negro."<sup>9</sup> Sal Paradise, the protagonist in Jack Kerouac's 1957 novel *On the Road*, yearns to be Black because white society has "not enough ecstasy for me, not enough life, joy, kicks, darkness, music, not enough night."<sup>10</sup> Beat writers discounted the inequality and indignities that Black Americans confronted, but genuinely yearned to wriggle free from the straitjacket of white middle-class culture.<sup>11</sup>

Older Americans, who had endured the Great Depression and World War II, often found the beats' rebellion incomprehensible. Who rebels against peace and prosperity? *Life* magazine profiled the beats in 1959, depicting them as lazy, unkempt, sandal-wearing, drug-addled, and self-absorbed in the "full flowering of their remarkable individualities." The magazine estimated that 90 percent of beats were white but noted that they revered Black Americans, especially jazz musicians and junkies, who were unburdened by white middle-class proprieties. "The things the Beat treasures and envies in the Negro," *Life* reported, "are the irresponsibility, cheerful promiscuity and subterranean defiance."<sup>12</sup> Black journalist Bob Cottrol offered a different account of the beats and the Village scene the following year in the *Amsterdam News*, New York's leading African American newspaper. Cottrol focussed on poet, jazz trumpeter, and painter Ted Joans, whose

<sup>8</sup> Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Ann Douglas, *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1995).

<sup>9</sup> Norman Mailer, "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster," *Dissent*, 4 (1957), 276–93. Douglas Field, "Beats, Black Culture and Bohemianism," in Ross Wilson, ed., *New York: A Literary History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 240–51; James Campbell, *This Is the Beat Generation: New York–San Francisco–Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 79–82, 140–42; 208–9; Steven Belletto, *The Beats: A Literary History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Louis Menand, *The Free World: Art and Thought in the Cold War* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021), 171–96, 477–87.

<sup>10</sup> Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Penguin, 2011), 170.

<sup>11</sup> Field.

<sup>12</sup> Paul O'Neil, "The Only Rebellion Around," *Life*, 30 Nov. 1959, 114–16 ff.

charismatic poetry readings had made him "a legendary Village personality." "It is only proper that a Negro be the leader of the Beatniks," Cottrol wrote, since white beats adopted their slang, uninhibited attitude toward sex, and love of jazz from Black Americans. Cottrol observed that interracial groups were commonplace in Village bars and cafes and accused the city government of concocting pretexts to revoke the liquor licenses or fire safety certificates of businesses in which Blacks and whites mingled to stymie integration and relationships between Black and white New Yorkers.<sup>13</sup>

Art critic John Gruen produced the most perceptive account of New York's cultural and artistic ferment in the early 1960s in *The New Bohemia* (1966), in which he surveyed the constellation of painters, writers, musicians, and filmmakers transforming the Lower East Side from a poor immigrant neighborhood into the East Village, a laboratory of cultural experimentation. Unlike the beats, who prized nonconformity, individualism, and authenticity, these new bohemians valued community. In Gruen's clunky but apt phrase, these young people represented "the combine generation," and craved "Combination – of brain and body, of public and private, of Black and white, of performance and audience, of one's inner and outer self."<sup>14</sup> Gruen's book tellingly begins by emphasizing young bohemians' rejection of one of America's most deeply entrenched taboos: interracial sex. The first thing a visitor to the East Village notices, he writes, is the number of "young Negroes, walking arm in arm with white girls." "The most distinguishing characteristic of the New Bohemia" was not its daring innovations in dance, music, art, or film, but "its acceptance of integration as an unquestioned part of the scene."<sup>15</sup>

The East Village fostered the creativity of a remarkable group of Black artists and writers. The Umbra Workshop, a group of Black writers founded in 1962, included poets Ted Joans and Amiri Baraka and novelist Ishmael Reed, whose innovative novels defied the strictures of America's literary canon in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1965, Reed was among the cofounders of the *East Village Other*, which became the forum for the emerging counterculture. Reed described the

<sup>13</sup> Bob Cottrol, "Black Beatniks in the Village," *Amsterdam News*, 25 June 1960, 1, 18; Cottrol, "Beatniks Beat in the Village?," *Amsterdam News*, 2 July 1960, 1, 34.

<sup>14</sup> John Gruen, *The New Bohemia: The Combine Generation* (New York: Shorecrest, 1966), 16. See also Gruen, "The New Bohemia," *New York Herald Tribune Magazine*, 29 Nov. 1964, 8–9, 11–13; Gruen, "Action + Anxiety = Chaos: Notes on the New Bohemia," *East Village Other*, 1, 17 (1 Aug. 1966), 3, 14.

<sup>15</sup> Gruen, *New Bohemia*, 6–18, 162, 173, 178, esp. 7–9; John Gruen, "Where Is New Bohemia Going?," *Vogue*, 1 Aug. 1967, 101, 141; Charlotte Curtis, "The Affluent Set Invades the East Village," *New York Times*, 29 Nov. 1964, 85.

East Village of the early and mid-1960s as a community in which artistic experimentation and interracial relationships flourished.<sup>16</sup>

San Francisco's North Beach also became a beat and hipster scene, and some beat writers, including poet Allen Ginsberg, decamped from New York for the the Bay Area in the mid-1950s. As North Beach rents climbed and the area was overrun by dive bars and tourists, some hipsters moved to the Haight–Ashbury neighborhood in the early 1960s, and the Haight replaced North Beach as the city's bohemian enclave. Across the bay, the University of California's Berkeley campus became a site of political protest as student supporters of the civil rights movement founded the Free Speech Movement in 1964 to challenge the university's prohibition of political advocacy on campus.<sup>17</sup> Hipsters were soon replaced by hippies – a word that was popularized in part by the 1965 publication of Malcolm X's autobiography, in which he recalled referring to white jazz fans as “hippies,” adding that they “acted more Negro than Negroes.” The white jazz aficionados who frequented Black nightclubs in Harlem in the 1940s and 1950s, he stated, craved “Negro ‘atmosphere’” and “Negro *soul*.”<sup>18</sup>

Allen Cohen launched the *San Francisco Oracle* in September 1966, and the magazine's articles and eye-popping illustrations indelibly shaped the counter-cultural philosophy and aesthetic. The *Oracle* proclaimed California “the center of radical change in every form” and endorsed LSD guru Timothy Leary's philosophy: “Turn on, tune in, drop out!”<sup>19</sup> The newspaper promoted the Human Be-In, a happening slated for January 1967, and boasted that this “Gathering of the Tribes” would bring together political activists, hipsters, and spiritual seekers in “A union of love and activism.”<sup>20</sup> Walter Bowart, editor of the *East Village Other*, declared that the hippies' “love experiment in the Haight” offered “alternatives to the established order” of conformity and greed.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Ishmael Reed, “Rise and Fall of a Mini-renaissance,” in “From Woodstock to Sarah Palin, or Not,” *New York Times*, 9 Aug. 2009, <https://archive.nytimes.com/roomfordebate.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/08/09/from-woodstock-to-sarah-palin>.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Cohen and Reginald E. Zelnik, eds., *The Free Speech Movement: Reflections on Berkeley in the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 1–102.

<sup>18</sup> Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2015), 96–97, original emphasis.

<sup>19</sup> “Affirming Humanness,” *San Francisco Oracle*, 1, 1 (20 Sept. 1966), 2; Rorabaugh, *American Hippies*, 5–6.

<sup>20</sup> “A Gathering of the Tribes for a Human Be-In,” *San Francisco Oracle*, 1, 5 (Jan. 1967), front cover; “The Gathering of the Tribes,” *San Francisco Oracle*, 1, 5 (Jan. 1967), 2; “The Beginning Is the Human Be-In,” *Berkeley Barb*, 6 Jan. 1967, 1; Moretta, *Hippies*, 117–38; John McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>21</sup> Walter Bowart, “San Francisco, Avalon Uncovered,” *East Village Other*, 2, 10 (15 April 1967), 1, 3–5, quotation at 3.

Extensive media attention to the Be-In and the Summer of Love focussed on hippies' eccentric clothing, free love, and drug use, and publicized San Francisco as the vortex of countercultural experimentation.<sup>22</sup>

White hippies and Black residents encountered one another face-to-face in both the Haight and the East Village but hardly saw eye-to-eye. An estimated 50,000 to 100,000 young Americans traveled to San Francisco in 1967 to participate in the Summer of Love and perhaps to remake the world.<sup>23</sup> Black residents, many of whom had recently moved from the nearby Fillmore district into the more affluent Haight–Ashbury, complained that the new arrivals had literally trashed the place. "These hippies have come in and turned a once nice neighborhood into a slum," stated one Black resident.<sup>24</sup> Many of the new arrivals were unemployed and unhoused, and hung out on the street day and night. Black parents in the Haight and the Fillmore worried that their children would be exposed to the flower children's free love and drug use, and complained that police officers allowed white youths to smoke pot openly but arrested Black people caught with drugs. "Negroes never would have been allowed to do what these white kids are doing," declared resident Doris Bullard. The *Chicago Defender*, the nation's most influential Black newspaper, complained that "Black residents must suffer in silence as a nation oohs and ahs over the filthy hippies while looking down its nose at non-whites trying to better themselves."<sup>25</sup>

Joan Didion's withering portrait of the flower children in "Slouching towards Bethlehem" (1967) depicted them not as dropouts from society, but as pathetically disconnected from it. Didion recounted the chasm between the hippies' renunciation of materialism and Black Americans' quest for integration and opportunity in her cringe-inducing account of the San Francisco Mime Troupe's blackface performance *The Minstrel Show, or Civil Rights in a Cracker Barrel*. Peter Coyote, a founding member of the Diggers – anarchists who renounced private property and performed street theater – who performed in the show, considered it a biting satire of American racism, and the troupe often performed *The Minstrel Show* to raise funds for civil rights organizations.

<sup>22</sup> Hendrik Hertzberg, "Dropouts with a Mission," *Newsweek*, 6 Feb. 1967, 92, 95. See also Steve Levine, "A Gathering of the Tribes: The First American Mehla," *San Francisco Oracle*, 1, 6 (Feb. 1967), 9, 24; Bach, *American Counterculture*, 101–6; Rorabaugh, 63, 65. For a widely read account of the Summer of Love see "The Hippies," *Time*, 7 July 1967, 18–22.

<sup>23</sup> Mark Harris, "The Flowering of the Hippies," *Atlantic*, Sept. 1967, at [www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1967/09/the-flowering-of-the-hippies/306619](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1967/09/the-flowering-of-the-hippies/306619); Moretta, 167–96.

<sup>24</sup> "Negroes Angered by Coast Hippies," *New York Times*, 24 Sept. 1967, 50. See also Sherri Cavan, *Hippies of the Haight* (St. Louis: New Critics Press, 1972), 44, 50–52; Arthur E. Hippler, "The Game of Black and White at Hunters Point," in Howard S. Becker, ed., *Culture and Civility in San Francisco* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Books, 1971), 53–75.

<sup>25</sup> "Negroes Wail Hippies Turn Frisco Area into a Real Slum," *Chicago Defender*, 7 Oct. 1967, 7.

But the guerrilla theater production unnerved audiences in San Francisco and other cities with its insensitive use of racist tropes and blackface actors, who taunted Black audience members with questions such as “Who stole Chuck Berry’s music?” and “What’d *America* ever do for you?”<sup>26</sup>

The East Village also became a mecca for thousands of young people in 1967, and longtime residents resented the influx, which caused rents to soar and filled the neighborhood’s streets with panhandlers and drug dealers.<sup>27</sup> The *New York Times* reported that the young people hanging out in the Village were overwhelmingly white, because “Negro youths apparently don’t need such a scene to declare their freedom from and hostility to the Establishment.”<sup>28</sup> Friction between whites, Blacks, and Puerto Ricans compounded tensions in the East Village. “Hippies and Negroes are traditional antagonists,” the *Times* stated. “Relatively few Negroes become hippies.”<sup>29</sup> Puerto Rican men, raised in Catholicism or Pentecostalism and a culture of *machismo*, detested hippies’ behavior and lax morality.<sup>30</sup> Black and Puerto Rican youths considered Tompkins Square Park their turf, and melees broke out in the park in May and June 1967, as Black and Puerto Rican men pelted hippies with bottles and debris.<sup>31</sup> After both sides called a truce, the Diggers hosted a free concert featuring rock and conga bands in an effort to alleviate tensions. Meanwhile, self-appointed Puerto Rican *serenos* (“peacekeepers” or “watchmen”) patrolled the neighborhood to maintain order, but antagonism between whites, Blacks, and Puerto Ricans persisted.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Joan Didion, *Slouching towards Bethlehem* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1968), 124–27, original emphasis; “San Fran Mime Troupe,” *East Village Other*, 2, 9 (1 April 1967), 15. Peter Coyote, *Sleeping Where I Fall* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1998), 39–56; R. G. Davis and Saul Landau, “A Minstrel Show, or Civil Rights in a Cracker Barrel,” in Susan Vaneta Mason, ed., *The San Francisco Mime Troupe Reader* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 26–56. R. G. Davis, *The San Francisco Mime Troupe: The First Ten Years* (Palo Alto, CA: Ramparts Press, 1975); Claudia Orenstein, *Festive Revolutions: The Politics of Popular Theater and the San Francisco Mime Troupe* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998), 90–123.

<sup>27</sup> Lewis Yablonsky, *The Hippie Trip* (New York: Pegasus, 1968), 97, 116, 134–46, esp. 145–46; Don McNeill, “Youthquake,” in McNeill, *Moving through Here* (New York: Knopf, 1970), 91–104.

<sup>28</sup> J. Kirk Sale and Ben Apfelbaum, “Report from Teeny-Boppersville,” *New York Times Magazine*, 27 May 1968, 81.

<sup>29</sup> Martin Arnold, “The East Village Today: Hippies Far from Happy as Slum Problems Grow,” *New York Times*, 15 Oct. 1967, 77

<sup>30</sup> John Kifner, “The East Village: A Changing Scene for Hippies,” *New York Times*, 11 Oct. 1967, 32.

<sup>31</sup> Alfred E. Clark, “City Hall Talks on Hippies Held,” *New York Times*, 3 June 1967, 16; Paul Hofmann, “Hippies Heighten East Side Tensions,” *New York Times*, 3 June 1967, 16; “Truce,” *East Village Other*, 2, 14 (15 June 1967), 1; Allan Katzman, “Poor Paranoid’s Almanac,” *East Village Other*, 2, 14 (15 June 1967), 7.

<sup>32</sup> “Hippies ‘Integrate’ with Puerto Ricans,” *New York Times*, 16 Aug. 1967, 36.



## THE COUNTERCULTURE IN BLACK AND WHITE

The 1960s counterculture coincided with the culmination of the civil rights movement and the rise of Black Power, and the counterculture was shaped by the Black freedom struggle. Most hippies endorsed the civil rights movement's commitment to nonviolence, individual dignity, and equality, but some hippies' disdain for politics and materialism rendered them indifferent to the the movement's goals of integration and economic opportunity for Black Americans. David Simpson, a hippie in San Francisco, declared, "The Negroes are fighting to become what we've rejected. We don't see any sense in that."<sup>33</sup> Hippies were similarly divided over Black nationalism, Black Power, and the Black Panthers. Those who embraced peace and love as a panacea for society's ills recoiled from militant rhetoric, but others hailed the Panthers as a revolutionary vanguard leading the assault against the System.<sup>34</sup>

Most Black Americans were dubious about the hippie philosophy and lifestyle, because dropping out and renouncing material possessions made little sense to people who had been denied equality and opportunity throughout American history. They dismissed the self-indulgence of white youths, who could afford to don bizarre clothes and spurn the workaday world for a year or two, after which they would cut their hair, exchange tie-dye for a suit and tie, and slip effortlessly into middle-class white society. "The hippies really bug us," stated one young Black resident of the Village, "because we know they can come down here and play their games for a while and then escape. And we can't, man." As another Black resident put it, "They're saying 'drop out of society,' and that's not where it's at for our guys – they want in."<sup>35</sup> A high-school student in San Francisco similarly complained that a white youth could pretend to be poor and outcast, but "he can return to the greener grass when he's good an' ready. But the brothers and sisters are FOREVER hippies."<sup>36</sup>

The nation's most eminent Black leader, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., expressed a mixture of ambivalence and respect for the hippie worldview in

<sup>33</sup> Martin Arnold, "Organized Hippies Emerge on Coast," *New York Times*, 5 May 1967, 41.

<sup>34</sup> Donna Jean Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 119–228; Daniel Crowe, *Prophets of Rage: The Black Freedom Struggle in San Francisco, 1945–1969* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 197–235; Tim Hodgdon, *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius: Masculinity in Two Countercultural Communities, 1965–83* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 18.

<sup>35</sup> Kifner.

<sup>36</sup> Rufus Byars, "Cultural Pluralism—A New Thang at Woodrow," *San Francisco Sun-Reporter*, 25 Oct. 1969, 12.

December 1967 when he delivered the prestigious Massey Lectures, sponsored annually by the Canadian Broadcasting Company. Addressing “The Young Generation and Social Action,” King considered the mixture of hope and alienation that impelled some young Americans to demand political change and caused others to become hippies and “disengage from society.” King took the hippies seriously, describing them as “not only colorful, but complex.” “The hardcore hippie is a remarkable contradiction,” he stated, because he drops out of society, “Yet he advocates love as the highest human value – love, which can exist only in communication between people and not in the total isolation of the individual.” King predicted that the hippie movement would prove evanescent, but he acknowledged hippies’ genuine discontent with American society and endorsed their commitment to peace.<sup>37</sup>

Writer James Baldwin visited San Francisco 1967 and saw no prospect of combining flower power and Black Power. Baldwin immediately noticed the gap separating young Black residents and hippies. Black youths and hippies bore one another no ill will but walked and talked right past one another in the Haight. The flower children had renounced the comforts of American society, but their talk of peace and love was jarringly at odds with Blacks’ growing militance. Black youths and hippies, Baldwin observed, “seemed to have no effect on each other, and they certainly were not together. The Blacks were not putting their trust in flowers. They were putting their trust in guns.” Acutely aware of America’s long history of racism and fraudulent commitment to equality and freedom, Black youths were dubious about whites’ newfound discovery of the nation’s hypocrisy. The white youths who flocked to the Haight, according to Baldwin, had said “no” to American society but had not taken the far more daring leap of saying “yes” to dismantling white supremacy. Baldwin predicted that the young people hanging out in the Haight in 1967 would soon return home and flower power would wilt as quickly as it had bloomed.<sup>38</sup>

Most Black nationalists shared Baldwin’s doubts about the counterculture’s sincerity and potential in 1967. As the Summer of Love neared its zenith in San Francisco in July 1967, beat poet Allen Ginsberg and Black Power leader Stokely Carmichael debated the hippie phenomenon at the Dialectics of Liberation Congress organized by psychotherapist Joe Berke in London. Ginsberg claimed that hippies were experimenting with new values that

<sup>37</sup> Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., “Youth and Social Action,” Massey Lecture, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 4 Dec. 1967, at <https://exchange.prx.org/series/31037-martin-luther-king-jr-massey-lectures>.

<sup>38</sup> James Baldwin, “To Be Baptized,” in Baldwin, *No Name in the Street* (New York: Dial Press, 1972), 85–194, esp. 185, 188.

transcended American culture. "The reason the hippies have taken on these beads, appurtenances, music, of shamanistic groups, of ecstatic trance-state types," he explained, "is because they are beginning to explore, for the first time, the universe of consciousness of other cultures beside their own." Carmichael dismissed hippies as "confused little kids who have run away from their home and who will return to their culture within a year or two."<sup>39</sup> In an essay on the congress and the confrontation between "Black Nationalists and the Hippies" in *Liberator* magazine, published by the Afro-American Research Institute in New York, actor and activist Clayton Riley urged Black youths to shun the counterculture, deriding hippies as "pathetic innocents" who would soon abandon their "charade" and return to comfortable middle-class lives. Even more damningly, Riley called hippies members of a whites-only club "as contemptuously racist as any local chapter of the Ku Klux Klan."<sup>40</sup>

The Black press treated hippies with a mixture of curiosity, contempt, and acceptance. In August 1967, *Ebony*, the nation's most prominent Black magazine, published a special issue on "Black Youth in America," which surveyed their hopes and frustrations and inquired whether the counterculture held any relevance for Black youths. Charles E. Brown's photo essay "The Hippies of 'Hashberry'" surveyed hippies' fashion and lifestyles just as *National Geographic* might explore the culture of a remote Amazonian tribe.<sup>41</sup> Psychologist Kenneth B. Clark, whose research on racism's harmful effects on Black children decisively influenced the US Supreme Court's 1954 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*, declared that Black youths "cannot escape into the oblivion of 'hippie land'" like their white counterparts, because the badge "of their rebellion is their color and it is always with them in America."<sup>42</sup> Donald R. Hopkins, assistant dean of students at the University of California, Berkeley, observed that the generation gap divided Black youths and their parents just as it separated white Americans. Black youths, like whites, distinguished themselves from their parents through fashion, hairstyles, and music, but did not embrace hippies' drug use or rock music (played by "artless adolescents").<sup>43</sup> But, importantly,

<sup>39</sup> Carmichael quoted in Danny Goldberg, *In Search of the Lost Chord: 1967 and the Hippie Idea* (New York: Akashic Books, 2017), 242. Peniel Joseph, *Stokely: A Life* (New York: Basic Civitas, 2014). Stokely Carmichael, "Black Power," in David Cooper, ed., *To Free a Generation: The Dialectics of Liberation* (New York: Collier Books, 1969), 150–74.

<sup>40</sup> Clayton Riley, "Black Nationalists and the Hippies," *Liberator*, 7, 12 (Dec. 1967), 4–7; Christopher M. Tinson, *Radical Intellect: Liberator Magazine and Black Activism in the 1960s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

<sup>41</sup> Charles E. Brown, "The Hippies of Hashberry," *Ebony*, Aug. 1967, 116–20.

<sup>42</sup> Kenneth B. Clark, "The Search for Identity," *Ebony*, Aug. 1967, 42.

<sup>43</sup> In 1969, *Ebony*'s "Fashion Fair" included hippie fashions. "Riding High," *Ebony*, June 1969, 167–68, 170. *Essence* magazine, launched in 1970, became the first fashion and lifestyle

white and Black young people rebelled for different reasons: white youths rebelled against “the inanities of middle classness” while Black youths battled against racial discrimination.<sup>44</sup>

Summer and love are fleeting, so the Summer of Love was perhaps destined to be short-lived. The Haight fell victim to its own success and to media hype, and many hippies believed that 1967 marked the counterculture’s demise, not its apogee. They accused the media, corporations, and advertisers of packaging the hippie phenomenon for a mass audience and shearing its potential to create a new society. Thousands of “plastic” hippies glommed onto the counterculture in search of a good time instead of seeking to build a new society, while “hip” merchants cashed in by peddling records, clothing, and drug paraphernalia.<sup>45</sup> In October 1967, sincere devotees of the counterculture held a funeral to mourn “The Death of Hippie, devoted son of mass media,” and the bygone summer.<sup>46</sup>

In both the Haight and the Village, residents’ antagonism toward hippies forced many young people to realize that cities were not the place to found a new society based on peace and love, and they moved to smaller communities in the countryside in northern California, upstate New York, Vermont, Colorado, and other locales.<sup>47</sup> The hippie flight “back to the land” held little allure for Black Americans, many of whom had fled cotton fields for cities during the twentieth century. While most commune members were white, a few Black youths did move back to the land. Toni Robinson joined the AAA commune in Colorado after graduating from college. Her father, journalist Louie Robinson, could not conceal his disdain for his daughter’s lifestyle or for hippies, but attempted to explain the appeal of communal living to *Ebony’s* readers. White commune members, he observed, “were about as far removed from the power-prejudice-orientation of Caucasian America as it is humanly possible to be.” His daughter and her white comrades had become so thoroughly disenchanted with American society that dropping out was

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magazine specifically for Black women. Tanisha C. Ford, *Liberated Threads: Black Women Style and the Global Politics of Soul* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

<sup>44</sup> Donald R. Hopkins, “Negro Youth,” *Ebony*, Aug. 1967, 110–12, 114–15. Some Black youths did become hippies. A Black reader wrote to *Defender* advice columnist Arletta Claire in 1970, distraught that his younger brother was “trying to be a Black hippie,” even though “there is no such thing.” Arletta Claire, “Arletta’s Advice: We Can’t Waste a Brother,” *Chicago Defender*, 10 June 1970, 10.

<sup>45</sup> On the swarm of merchants and the mass media see Perry, *The Haight–Ashbury*, 108, 269.

<sup>46</sup> “Death of Hip and Birth of Free America,” *Berkeley Barb*, 29 Sept. 1967, 1, 3; “... So Who Mutha’d the ‘Hippies’?,” *Berkeley Barb*, 6 Oct. 1967, 1; Jeff Jassen, “X-Hip Editor Freed at Last,” *Berkeley Barb*, 6 Oct. 1967, 2.

<sup>47</sup> John Kifner, “Hippies Fading from City Scene,” *New York Times*, 26 Aug. 1968, 41; Michael Schechtman, “Holiday Commune a Thing to Groove,” *Berkeley Barb*, 25 Aug. 1967, 6; Terry A. Reim, “Oompali: Just What We Were Kneading,” *Berkeley Barb*, 12 July 1968, 7.

the only viable response. Communal living would create "a prototype for the future," in which people of different races, ethnicities, and classes would live together peacefully.<sup>48</sup> Most communes, though, were white enclaves, and some commune members moved to the countryside to escape from cities' racial diversity. When musician and civil rights activist Nina Simone visited Morningstar commune, established by folk musician and comedian Lou Gottlieb in California's Sonoma valley, she immediately noticed that "there aren't any black people here." One new arrival at Morningstar was dismayed to discover that "there are hippies here who are full-blown bigots."<sup>49</sup>

### CULTURAL RADICALISM, CULTURAL NATIONALISM

After the historic victories of the Civil Rights movement, race relations became more fraught in the late 1960s. Black rebellions, beginning with the Harlem protest of 1964, convulsed American society in the 1960s.<sup>50</sup> The murder of Malcolm X in 1965 fueled the growth of Black nationalism. Stokely Carmichael's call for Black Power and the revolutionary rhetoric of the Black Panthers inspired many Black youths and rattled some white Americans.<sup>51</sup> The counterculture, antiwar movement, and Black Power traveled different paths in the 1960s but those paths frequently intersected, and the decade's cultural and political upheavals reinforced one another in 1968 and 1969 during what historian Terry Anderson calls "the second wave" of the 1960s.<sup>52</sup>

While most Black nationalists dismissed the counterculture, some saw potential in its cultural radicalism. Eldridge Cleaver, minister of information for the Black Panther Party, stated that the counterculture was more threatening to the status quo than political protest, telling the *Berkeley Barb*, "The cultural revolution in the white community is to the left of the political left in the

<sup>48</sup> Louie Robinson, "Life Inside a Hippie Commune," *Ebony*, Nov. 1969, 91, 98. Steven Conn, *Americans against the City: Anti-urbanism in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 229–76.

<sup>49</sup> Nina Simone quoted in Kate Daloz, *We Are as Gods: Back to the Land in the 1970s on the Quest for a New America* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2016), 95; Yablonsky, *The Hippie Trip*, 193.

<sup>50</sup> On the civil rights movement in the North and whites' resistance to it see Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008). Black rebellions continued after 1968. See Elizabeth Hinton, *America on Fire: The Untold History of Police Violence and Black Rebellion since the 1960s* (New York: Liveright, 2021).

<sup>51</sup> Mark Whitaker, *Saying It Loud: 1966 – The Year Black Power Challenged the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2023).

<sup>52</sup> Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in America from Greensboro to Wounded Knee* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), xxii.

white community.”<sup>53</sup> The hippies, he wrote in *Soul on Ice* (1968), were rattling the American political system:

The characteristics of the white rebels which most alarm their elders – the long hair, the new dances, their love for Negro music, their use of marijuana, their mystical attitude toward sex – are all tools of their rebellion. They have turned these tools against the totalitarian fabric of American society – and they mean to change it.<sup>54</sup>

Kathleen Cleaver did not share her husband’s enthusiasm for hippies, who were only “retreating into a fantasy world of pretty colors, pleasant smells, and drug induced sensations.” But Eldridge, she wrote, loved to cross the bay from Oakland to “soak up the panorama” along Haight Street because the hippies “projected a whimsical, free flowing spirit that must have been immensely appealing to a man who had spent ten years caged up in prison.”<sup>55</sup> After several scuffles broke out between Panthers and hippies, it was likely Cleaver who called a truce in 1968 in the pages of the *Black Panther* newspaper: “Black brothers stop vamping on the hippies. They are not your enemy ... WE HAVE NO QUARREL WITH THE HIPPIES. LEAVE THEM ALONE. Or the BLACK PANTHER PARTY will deal with you.”<sup>56</sup> Black activist Julius Lester also endorsed the counterculture’s potential to change the US, calling it an utter renunciation of American society.<sup>57</sup> Hippies’ and Yippies’ outrageous dress and behavior, he wrote, waged “psychological guerilla warfare” that alarmed middle-class and conservative Americans even more than the SDS, the SNCC, or the Black Panthers. “In America, maybe, just maybe, the paths to revolution will be clothed not only in guerrilla uniforms but beads and incense.”<sup>58</sup> Even the *Chicago Defender*, which frequently criticized and ridiculed hippies, conceded that they might help change American society. *Defender* editor Louis Martin

<sup>53</sup> “Cleaver Tells How He’ll Lead,” *Berkeley Barb*, 23 Aug. 1968, 5. When Black Panther chairman Bobby Seale was imprisoned in 1971 for conspiracy and inciting a riot at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, the Grateful Dead played a benefit concert at the Revolutionary Intercommunal Day of Solidarity in the Oakland Auditorium to raise funds for the Panthers and for Seale’s defense.

<sup>54</sup> Eldridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1968), 75.

<sup>55</sup> Kathleen Neal Cleaver, “The Summer of Love,” in Kalamu Ya Salaam and Kysha N. Brown, eds., *Fertile Ground: Memories & Visions* (New Orleans: Runagate Press, 1996), 78–79.

<sup>56</sup> *Black Panther*, 14 Sept. 1968, 10.

<sup>57</sup> Julius Lester, *Look Out, Whitey! Black Power’s Gon’ Get Your Mama!* (New York: Dial Press, 1968), 121.

<sup>58</sup> Julius Lester, “The Yippies,” in *Revolutionary Notes* (New York: Richard W. Baron, 1969), 79, 81; published in *The Guardian*, 30 March 1968; Lester, “Yippies in Chicago,” *Revolutionary Notes*, 152; published in *The Guardian*, 31 Aug. 1968. On the Yippies’ “theater-in-the-streets” see Jerry Rubin, *Do It! Scenarios of the Revolution* (New York: Simon & Schuster), 132–43. Bach, *American Counterculture*, 143–48; Moretta, *Hippies*, 253–84; Rorabaugh, *American Hippies*, 150–55.

wrote hopefully in 1969 that protest by leftists, hippies, Black militants, "and all the other young hell-raisers" might "uproot the raw racism that is poisoning and strangling the life out of our democracy."<sup>59</sup>

The promise and perils of political and cultural radicalism intrigued filmmakers. Arthur Penn's 1967 film *Bonnie and Clyde* depicted the Depression-era gangsters as countercultural renegades, and the success of *Easy Rider* (1969), a road movie about acid-tripping bikers, proved to studio executives that movies about hippies could lure young viewers into theaters. Notably, Italian director Michelangelo Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point* (1970) explored the links between political protest, the counterculture, and Black nationalism. The film's *cinéma vérité* opening scene depicts a testy meeting of white and Black campus radicals, one of whom is portrayed by Kathleen Cleaver. Wearied by internecine squabbling, a white student, Mark, announces that he is willing to die for the revolution but "not of boredom" and stalks out of the room. After a campus protest erupts in violence, Mark is suspected of shooting a police officer, steals an airplane, and flees to the desert. There he meets Daria, a hippie girl who works for Lee Allen, a Los Angeles real-estate developer hell-bent on gobbling up desert land to build a resort community, Sunny Dunes. Mark and Daria paint the stolen airplane in psychedelic designs and political slogans and he flies the plane to Los Angeles, where he is shot dead by police officers. In the film's extended final scene, set to Pink Floyd's alternately dreamy and terrifying psychedelic instrumental, "Come In Number 51, Your Time Is Up," Daria envisions Lee's hillside mansion blown to bits. Blasted by critics for its incomprehensibility and wooden acting, *Zabriskie Point* delivered a searing indictment of American society and offered an understanding portrait of youthful alienation.<sup>60</sup>

Cultural nationalism was central to the Black nationalism in the late 1960s. After Malcolm X was murdered in 1965, poet Amiri Baraka moved from the East Village to Harlem, and launched the Black Arts Movement (BAM), which became the most influential Black cultural organization of the 1960s. He also penned "Black Art," which sounded the call for Black nationalism and Black culture: "We want a black poem. And a / Black World."<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Louis Martin, "Youth May Uproot Racism in Attack on Establishment," *Chicago Defender*, 18 Oct. 1969, 3.

<sup>60</sup> *Zabriskie Point*, dir. Michelangelo Antonioni, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1970; Mark Harris, *Pictures at a Revolution: Five Movies and the Birth of the New Hollywood* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 251–53. Jon Lewis, *Road Trip to Nowhere: Hollywood Encounters the Counterculture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2022), 56–72, 90–94.

<sup>61</sup> Amiri Baraka "Black Art," *Liberator*, Jan. 1966, 18; Daniel Matlin, *On the Corner: African American Intellectuals and the Urban Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 123–94; Edward Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); GerShun

Inspired by BAM and the writings of anticolonialist Frantz Fanon, poet Don L. Lee (Haki Madhubuti) urged Black Americans in 1969 to repudiate white cultural forms and create “blackpoetry” and “blackmusic.”<sup>62</sup> “Culture,” he wrote, borrowing from Fanon, “is the sustaining force of any nation.”<sup>63</sup> In “A Message All Blackpeople Can Dig” (1969), Lee urged Black Americans to shun the counterculture: “we are not hippies, / WE WERE BORN HIP.”<sup>64</sup> The following year, in “Move Un-noticed to Be Noticed: A Nationhood Poem,” Lee taunted “the first black hippy i’ve ever met,” asking him, “why u be dresen so funny anyhow, hunh?” Lee urged Black Americans to “be something real” and “move, into our own, not theirs.”<sup>65</sup>

Writer Ishmael Reed, however, rejected racial and cultural separatism. In 1967, Reed moved from the East Village to Berkeley, where he observed the hippie subculture and the Black Panther Party firsthand.<sup>66</sup> Upon arriving in San Francisco he immediately noticed that Black culture suffused the counterculture: “its members dress like Blacks talk like Blacks walk like Blacks, gesture like Blacks wear Afros and indulge in Black music and dance.”<sup>67</sup> Reed’s wildly inventive novels, *The Free-Lance Pallbearers* (1967) and *Yellow Back Radio Broke-Down* (1969), combined Black cultural nationalism and countercultural experimentation. Black and white culture, he believed, invariably influenced one another. In his “Neo-HooDoo Manifesto” (1969), he envisioned America’s cultural gombo enriched by Black culture, music, dance, folk traditions, and wisdom that whites had for centuries suppressed. Dominated for centuries by white people, ideas, and institutions, America would remain repressive until Black culture liberated white Americans from their inhibitions.<sup>68</sup> Reed fully realized his Neo-HooDoo aesthetic in his third novel,

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Avilez, *Radical Aesthetics and Modern Black Nationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016); William L. van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965–1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>62</sup> Don L. Lee (Haki Madhubuti), *Think Black* (Detroit: Broadside Press, 1969), 6; Lee, *Don’t Cry, Scream* (Detroit: Broadside Press, 1969), 15; Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1968), 206–48; Fanon, “Racism and Culture,” in Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 29–44.

<sup>63</sup> Don L. Lee (Haki Madhubuti), “Introduction: Louder but Softer,” in Lee, *We Walk the Way of the New World* (Detroit: Broadside Press, 1970), 11–24, 13.

<sup>64</sup> Don L. Lee (Haki Madhubuti), “A Message All Blackpeople Can Dig,” in Lee, *Think Black*, 63–64.

<sup>65</sup> Don L. Lee (Haki Madhubuti), “Move Un-noticed to Be Noticed: A Nationhood Poem,” in Lee, *We Walk the Way of the New World*, 64–71, 68, ll. 1, 58–59.

<sup>66</sup> Ishmael Reed, “Black Power,” *East Village Other*, 1, 18 (15 Aug. 1966), 1, 14.

<sup>67</sup> Ishmael Reed, “Neo-HooDoo Manifesto,” in Reed, *Conjure: Selected Poems, 1963–1970* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972), 20–25, 20–21. Originally published in the *Los Angeles Free Press*, 18–24 Sept. 1969.

<sup>68</sup> Reed, “Neo-HooDoo Manifesto.”



*Mumbo Jumbo* (1972). Set in the 1920s, the novel charts the booming popularity of "Jes Grew," shorthand for jazz and Black culture. Scholar and composer James Weldon Johnson wrote in 1922 that ragtime originated as folk music in New Orleans in the nineteenth century and "jes' grew" until it became "the one artistic production by which America is known the world over. It has been all-conquering. Everywhere it is hailed as 'American music.'"<sup>69</sup> Well, not quite everywhere. Jes Grew alarms some white Americans, who consider it a dangerous virus because ragtime and jazz cause many white listeners to shake their hips and shake off their inhibitions. Warren G. Harding leads the effort to stamp out the virus, campaigning for President in 1920 on the slogan "Let's be done with Wiggle and Wobble." The Wallflower Order, an organization of elite white Americans (whom no one ever asked to dance) works feverishly to stop the virus and preserve "Atonism," America's repressive, Eurocentric, monotheistic culture. *Mumbo Jumbo* also satirizes some Black nationalists, whose austere ideology Reed found as oppressive and life-denying as the dominant white culture. Abdul Hamid, a Black Muslim editor who ranks among the novel's villains, is a stand-in for poet Don Lee (Haki Madhubuti).<sup>70</sup> Reed's protagonist and hero, detective Papa LaBas, strives valiantly to fend off Jes Grew's foes. For LaBas as for Reed, Neo-HooDoo is not a disease but a cure, "an anti-virus" that offers the antidote to America's stultifying culture.<sup>71</sup> At the novel's end, LaBas looks ahead and promises, "They will try to depress Jes Grew but it will only spring back and prosper."<sup>72</sup> In the novel's epilogue, Reed concedes that Jes Grew's foes suppressed Black culture in the 1920s and thwarted it again when it reemerged amid the cultural and racial upheaval of the 1960s. Ultimately, though, the irresistible appeal of Neo-HooDoo, America's Black counterculture, would enliven America's bland, repressive, white-dominated society and stir up, as Reed would call it, a cultural gombo.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>69</sup> James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Poetry* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1922), at <https://scalar.lehigh.edu/african-american-poetry-a-digital-anthology/james-weldon-johnson-preface-to-the-book-of-american-negro-poetry-1922>.

<sup>70</sup> For perceptive analyses of Reed's Neo-HooDoo aesthetic see Henry Louis Gates Jr., "'On the Blackness of Blackness': Ishmael Reed and a Critique of the Sign," in Gates, *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 233–56; Jennifer A. Jordan, "Ideological Tension: Cultural Nationalism and Multiculturalism in the Novels of Ishmael Reed," in Dana A. Williams, ed., *Contemporary African American Fiction: New Critical Essays* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2009), 37–61; Patrick McGee, *Ishmael Reed and the Ends of Race* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

<sup>71</sup> Ishmael Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo* (New York: Atheneum, 1988; first published 1972), 33.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

## MY SOUL HAS BEEN PSYCHEDELICIZED

Young Americans' ideas about race and music were inseparable from one another in the 1960s. As music historian Josh Kun notes, "music does not just 'participate' in American racial constructions, it has been central to their history." Black and white musicians had traded melodies and rhythms for decades. Blues, R & B, and soul all inspired rock 'n' roll, and some white Americans condemned rock 'n' roll as Negro music in the 1950s and early 1960s – yet, by the late 1960s, rock was categorized as music played by white musicians for white listeners.<sup>74</sup> *Rolling Stone*, founded in San Francisco in 1967, became the most influential rock magazine and played a pivotal role in defining rock music as white and enshrining a canon of white musicians and records. The magazine also covered blues, soul, and funk, publishing articles on James Brown, Aretha Franklin, and Motown artists and posited that Black music possessed an authenticity that white musicians could emulate but not attain. Ralph J. Gleason, the magazine's cofounder and most eminent music critic, contended that blues and jazz emerged from Black Americans' long history of oppression while white rockers and fans were still learning to clap on the backbeat.<sup>75</sup> Amiri Baraka also drew a stark boundary between Black and white music, writing in 1966 that Black music expressed a yearning for freedom, while the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and other imitators were engaging in outright theft and minstrelsy. For poet Ted Joans, white rock musicians' success confirmed a well-known truth: "crime does pay."<sup>76</sup> But music was not strictly bounded by the color line,

<sup>74</sup> Josh Kun, *Audiotopia: Music, Race, and America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 26; Ronald Radano and Philip V. Bohlman, Introduction to Radano and Bohlman, eds., *Music and Racial Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 5; Jack Hamilton, *Just around Midnight: Rock and Roll and the Racial Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 3–8; Randall J. Stephens, *The Devil's Music: How Christians Inspired, Condemned, and Embraced Rock and Roll* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 16–19, 65–101; Michael Omi and Howard Winant, eds., *Racial Formation in the United States*, 3rd edn (New York: Routledge, 2014), 1–18.

<sup>75</sup> Ralph J. Gleason, "Stop This Shuck, Mike Bloomfield," *Rolling Stone*, 11 May 1968, 10. Hamilton, 221–22, criticizes Gleason's understanding of race and musical genres.

<sup>76</sup> Amiri Baraka, "The Changing Same (R & B and New Black Music)," in Jones, *Black Music* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1967), 205–6 (the essay is dated 1966; see *ibid.*, 180); Jones, *Blues People: The Negro Experience in White America and the Music That Developed From It* (New York: Morrow Quill, 1963), ix–x; Ted Joans, "There Are Those," in Joans, *Black Pow-Wow: Jazz Poems* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969), 58; Kelefa Sanneh, *Major Labels: A History of Popular Music in Seven Genres* (New York: Penguin, 2021), 410–15.

and white rockers did not simply imitate or steal Black music but adapted it, while soul musicians were influenced by rock and by the counterculture.<sup>77</sup>

In the 1950s and early 1960s, hipsters considered jazz the sound of freedom and disdained rock 'n' roll as commercial and unsophisticated. But, as rock music became more popular and its lyrics more socially conscious in the 1960s, some listeners believed that the music possessed the power to inspire real change in American society. Sam Silver wrote in the *East Village Other* in 1967, "The music is spokesman for the culture." Journalist Chester Anderson, who migrated from the East Village to San Francisco in 1967, gushed in the *San Francisco Oracle* that rock was "a way of life" and a quest for "total freedom" that offered humanity's "first real hope for the future" since the advent of nuclear weapons in 1945, while Gleason called music "a power to change the world."<sup>78</sup>

Music historians commonly described soul music as the voice of Black solidarity and protest, and soul has until recently been omitted from accounts of the counterculture.<sup>79</sup> But Emily J. Lordi emphasizes instead soul's extraordinary diversity and musicians' experimentalism in the 1960s and early 1970s. Psychedelia influenced both rock and soul in the 1960s, as musicians experimented with distortion, changing time signatures, and other techniques to evoke the consciousness-altering effects of drug use.<sup>80</sup> Vast economic, political, and cultural differences separated San Francisco's Haight–Ashbury from the Black Panthers' headquarters in Oakland, but musical styles crossed the Bay and musicians combined them to create the San Francisco sound. The first

<sup>77</sup> Hamilton, 3–8; Patrick Burke, *Tear Down the Walls: White Radicalism and Black Power in 1960s Rock* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021), 13. On the "urgent need for rock lit and Black studies to 'speak' to each other" see Daphne A. Brooks, *Liner Notes for the Revolution: The Intellectual Life of Black Feminist Sound* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021), 35.

<sup>78</sup> Sam Silver, "Monterey Pop Festival," *East Village Other*, 2, 16 (15 July 1967), 8; Chester Anderson, "Notes for the New Geology," *San Francisco Oracle*, 1, 6 (Feb. 1967), 2; Ralph J. Gleason, "A Power to Change the World," *Rolling Stone*, 22 June 1968, 10; Nick Bromell, *Tomorrow Never Knows: Rock and Psychedelics in the 1960s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 48–57.

<sup>79</sup> Peter Guralnick, *Sweet Soul Music: Rhythm and Blues and the Southern Dream of Freedom* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986); Phyl Garland, *The Sound of Soul* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1969); Monique Guillory and Richard Green, *Soul: Black Power, Politics, and Pleasure* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

<sup>80</sup> Emily J. Lordi, *The Meaning of Soul: Black Music and Resilience since the 1960s* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020), 1–18, esp. 5; Lordi, "Everybody Is a Star," *New York Times Style Magazine*, 10 Feb. 2022, 116–20. Published online as "The Radical Experimentation of Black Psychedelia," at [www.nytimes.com/2022/02/10/t-magazine/blue-psychedelia.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/10/t-magazine/blue-psychedelia.html). For a perceptive reading of the multiple meanings of a song see Mark Kurlansky, *Ready for a Brand New Beat: How "Dancing in the Street" Became the Anthem for a Changing America* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2013).

psychedelic soul band, Rotary Connection, formed in 1966, and included white and Black musicians and infused soul with the hallucinatory aesthetic of psychedelia.<sup>81</sup> Black and white musicians created psychedelic rock and soul, and several of the most significant psychedelic bands of the 1960s – the Jimi Hendrix Experience, Sly and the Family Stone, Love, the Chambers Brothers – included Black and white players and mixed rock and soul. Love, who featured guitarist Arthur Lee, quickly became one of the hottest bands on Los Angeles’s Sunset Strip in 1966. Love’s third album, *Forever Changes*, released in November 1967, was a psychedelic folk rock masterpiece that expressed disillusionment as the counterculture passed its zenith and the body count in the Vietnam War grew: “And the water’s turned to blood / And if you don’t think so / Go turn on your tub / And it it’s mixed with mud / You’ll see it turn to gray.”<sup>82</sup> “My soul has been psychedelized,” the Chambers Brothers proclaimed in their eleven-minute anthem “Time Has Come Today” (1967). The song’s thumping garage rock beginning segues into a six-minute freak-out of distortion, reverb, laughing, screaming, percussion, and tempo changes. A shortened version of the song released as a single soared to number 11 on the *Billboard* chart in 1968. As the song’s lyrics proclaim, “The rules have changed today.”<sup>83</sup>

The lingo of psychedelia and the counterculture became ubiquitous in soul lyrics and in slang, and getting high became synonymous with pleasures of every sort. Ray Charles’s cover of the Coasters’ “Let’s Go Get Stoned” (the lyrics referred to gin, but many listeners thought of marijuana) briefly topped *Billboard*’s R & B chart in 1966. After leaving the Motown label in 1968, the Isley Brothers released a single, “It’s Your Thing,” the following year, which used the countercultural mantra, “do your own thing,” to send a kiss-off to Motown president Berry Gordy: “It’s your thing, do what you wanna do.” The Isleys scored a hit with “I Turned You On” in 1969.<sup>84</sup> Motown also experimented with psychedelic sounds and themes. In 1968, the Temptations recorded their first psychedelic soul single, “Cloud Nine,” which used a wah-wah pedal (a first for Motown) and endorsed escapism as a response to poverty and hardship: “Every man in his mind is free / You’re a million miles from reality.” The following year the Temptations released *Puzzle People* and *Psychedelic Shack*. Musically, the title track of

<sup>81</sup> Lordi, *The Meaning of Soul*, 62–66.

<sup>82</sup> Love, “A House Is Not a Motel,” *Forever Changes*, Elektra EKS-74013, 1967, LP.

<sup>83</sup> Chambers Brothers, *The Time Has Come*, Columbia, CS 9522, 1967, LP; Chambers Brothers, “Time Has Come Today,” Columbia 44414, 1968, 7-inch single.

<sup>84</sup> Ray Charles, “Let’s Go Get Stoned,” ABC-Paramount 10808, 1966, 7-inch single; Isley Brothers, “It’s Your Thing,” T-Neck Records, TN 901, 1969, 7-inch single; Isley Brothers, “I Turned You On,” T-Neck TN 902, 1969, 7-inch single.

*Psychedelic Shack* was not especially trippy, but the lyrics beckoned listeners to a place "Where you can really do your own thing" and dabbled in mind expansion: "Come in and take a look at your mind / You'll be surprised what you might find."<sup>85</sup>

Musical and political rebellion were not confined to the East and West Coasts. Detroit was home to both Motown records and a vibrant rock music scene that included the Stooges and the outspoken leftist band MC5. Race relations in the city were tense, and Black Detroiters erupted in rebellion in August 1967, but rocker and Detroit native Alice Cooper described the city's music scene as integrated. White fans attended soul concerts and Black fans and musicians, including George Clinton's band, Funkadelic, checked out the city's rock shows. "Soul music," Cooper recalled, "ran through Detroit rock 'n' roll."<sup>86</sup> Detroit music promoter and hell-raiser John Sinclair founded the White Panther Party in 1968 to support the Black Panthers and Yippies. The White Panthers' manifesto borrowed words from Malcolm X, calling for nothing less than a "total assault on the culture by any means necessary, including rock and roll, dope, and fucking in the streets." Sinclair, who managed MC5, called rock "a weapon of cultural revolution" and hyped the band as "rock and roll guerillas" whose music would shake the walls of the Establishment.<sup>87</sup>

The 1969 Woodstock festival is often remembered as the high tide of the counterculture and living proof that the hippie philosophy had not died and that the young generation possessed the keys to a harmonious society.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>85</sup> The Temptations, "Cloud Nine," Gordy G 7081, 1968, 7-inch single; the Temptations, *Cloud Nine*, Gordy (Motown), GS939, 1969, LP; the Temptations, "Psychedelic Shack," Gordy G 7096, 1969, 7-inch single. The Supremes recorded their last hit for Motown in 1970 with "Stoned Love," which espoused the hope that love could bring world peace. The Supremes, "Stoned Love," Motown M 1172, 1970, 7-inch single.

<sup>86</sup> Michael Hann, "It Was Tribal and Sexual': Alice Cooper on the Debauchery of Detroit Rock," *The Guardian*, 26 Feb. 2021, at [www.theguardian.com/music/2021/feb/26/alice-cooper-detroit-rock](http://www.theguardian.com/music/2021/feb/26/alice-cooper-detroit-rock).

<sup>87</sup> John Sinclair, "Rock and Roll Is a Weapon of Cultural Revolution," in Sinclair, *Guitar Army: Street Writings/Prison Writings* (New York: Douglas Book Corp., 1972), 113–19; Sinclair, "The White Panther State/meant," in *ibid.*, 103–5; originally published in *Fifth Estate*, 14 Nov. 1968, and in the *East Village Other*, 3, 5 (15 Nov. 1968), 11; John Sinclair and D. A. Latimer, "White Panther Party," *East Village Other*, 4, 26 (28 May 1969), 3; Jeff A. Hale, "The White Panthers' 'Total Assault on the Culture'," in Braunstein and Doyle, *Imagine Nation*, 125–56; Burke, *Tear Down the Walls*, 92–117. In 1971 Sinclair jettisoned the White Panther moniker and renamed the organization the Rainbow People's Party. John Sinclair et al., "Let It Grow," in Sinclair, *Guitar Army*, 325–26; originally published as a "Statement of the Central Committee, Rainbow People's Party," *Ann Arbor Sun*, 1 May 1971.

<sup>88</sup> "It Was Like Balling for the First Time," *Rolling Stone*, 10 Sept. 1969, 1; Greil Marcus, "The Woodstock Festival," *Rolling Stone*, 10 Sept. 1969, 16.

Most of the performers at Woodstock were white rock bands and folk musicians and most of the 400,000 people who attended the festival were white. The murder of Martin Luther King the previous year blighted hopes for interracial cooperation, and comparatively few Black youths attended the concert.<sup>89</sup> But the festival was not devoid of Black performers or attendees, and the concert opened with folksinger Richie Havens, featured Sly and the Family Stone, and concluded with Jimi Hendrix.<sup>90</sup> The greatest rock guitarist of the 1960s, Hendrix was undeniably a Black hippie. He invented psychedelic blues by wringing never-before-heard sounds from his Stratocaster, and his troubador lifestyle and flamboyant clothes can only be described as hippieish. In “If 6 was 9,” he taunted, “Mr. Business man, you can’t dress like me,” then espoused the counterculture’s mantra, “do your own thing”: “If all the hippies cut off their hair, I don’t care.”<sup>91</sup> Music critics and listeners sometimes struggled to account for a Black guitarist at a moment when rock, despite its roots in the blues and R & B, was being racialized and defined as white music. Hendrix’s live shows also flummoxed some music critics, and his overtly sexual performance of the Troggs’ “Wild Thing” at the Monterey Pop Festival in June 1967 wowed listeners but provoked Robert Christgau to slur Hendrix as “a psychedelic Uncle Tom” who pandered to the audience.<sup>92</sup> Hendrix’s signature song, “Purple Haze,” evoked a drug-induced vision, or stupor, and his searing rendition of the “Star-Spangled Banner” at Woodstock’s culmination transformed the national anthem into a hundred-decibel howl against the Vietnam War.<sup>93</sup>

No musician more deftly melded Black and white musical influences with the spirit of the counterculture than Sly Stone, whose songs were trippy, funky, and danceable. As a DJ and record producer, Stone helped create the San Francisco sound, recording white bands such as the Beau Brummels, the Vejtables, the Mojo Men, and the Great Society, with singer Grace Slick. Sly and the Family Stone released their debut album in 1967 and recorded a string of hits with their hybrid of funk and psychedelia. While

<sup>89</sup> Reed, “Rise and Fall of a Mini-renaissance.” On Woodstock see Moretta, *Hippies*, 285–302.

<sup>90</sup> “We Are One . . .,” *East Village Other*, 4, 38 (20 Aug. 1969), 1; Jaakov Kohn, “Hirap,” *East Village Other*, 4, 38 (20 Aug. 1969), 2; John Hilgerdt, “That Aquarian Exposition,” *East Village Other*, 4, 38 (20 Aug. 1969), 7–9.

<sup>91</sup> The Jimi Hendrix Experience, “If 6 was 9,” on the Jimi Hendrix Experience, *Axis: Bold as Love*, Reprise 0853, 1970.

<sup>92</sup> Robert Christgau, “Anatomy of a Love Festival,” *Esquire*, Jan. 1968, at [www.robertchristgau.com/xg/bk-aow/festival.php](http://www.robertchristgau.com/xg/bk-aow/festival.php). On Hendrix’s image see Lauren Onkey, “Voodoo Child: Jimi Hendrix and the Politics of Race in the Sixties,” in Braunstein and Doyle, *Imagine Nation*, 189–214.

<sup>93</sup> Jimi Hendrix, “Star Spangled Banner,” *Woodstock: Music from the Original Soundtrack and More*, Atlantic SD 500-2, 1970, LP.

Stone's danceable grooves propelled the band's music, songs such as "Hot Fun in the Summertime" (1969) were laid back and far from funky. As one music critic noted, Stone's songs appealed to listeners Black and white, and to straights and freaks: "They encourage do-your-own thing dignity against *any* establishment – plastic or acid."<sup>94</sup> Stone's sound mingled Black and white influences and his lyrics explicitly addressed the problem of racism. "Everyday People," which topped *Billboard's* Hot 100 and soul charts in early 1969, concluded with a singsong yet affecting indictment of bigotry: "There is a yellow one that won't accept the Black one / That won't accept the red one that won't accept the white one / And different strokes for different folks / And so on and so on and scooby dooby doo."<sup>95</sup> Stone brought his psychedelic sound, outrageous clothing, electrifying stage presence, and racially integrated band from the Haight to Harlem in 1969 when he performed at the Harlem Cultural Festival, a series of concerts in Mount Morris Park. Fans called the band back for several encores, and Stone's performance inspired other bands to jettison matching suits and choreographed dance routines and adopt his looser, funkier style.<sup>96</sup> When Sly and the Family Stone played Woodstock a few weeks later, the band's mixture of trippiness and brotherhood set to an irresistible dance beat "completely captured the audience's imagination" according to reviewer Mike Jahn, even though the band's set was sandwiched between Janis Joplin and the Who in the wee hours of the morning.<sup>97</sup>

The surging influence of Black Power in the late 1960s inspired songwriters to condemn racism more forcefully and led some music critics to distinguish between Black and white music.<sup>98</sup> The Black Panthers instructed Stone to write explicitly political lyrics and to replace the two white members of his band with Black musicians. Stone refused to sack his bandmates, but *Stand!*, released in May 1969, included "Everyday People" and a more blunt antiracist statement, "Don't Call Me N\_\_\_\_, Whitey."<sup>99</sup> Two years passed between

<sup>94</sup> Barbara Campbell, "Sly Stone Is Together," *New York Times*, 1 Feb. 1970, D67. See also Ben Fong-Torres, "Everybody Is a Star: The Travels of Sylvester Stewart," *Rolling Stone*, 19 March 1970, 28 ff.; Sly & the Family Stone, "Hot Fun in the Summertime," Epic 5-10497, 1969, 7-inch single.

<sup>95</sup> Sly & the Family Stone, "Everyday People," Epic 5-10407, 1968, 7-inch single.

<sup>96</sup> The Harlem Cultural Festival was held from 1967 to 1969. The 1969 festival was a series of six concerts held in Mount Morris Park. Raymond Robinson, "Festival Draws over 50,000," *Amsterdam News*, 2 Aug. 1969, 1, 43. The 1969 Harlem Festival is documented in *Summer of Soul*, dir. Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson, Searchlight Pictures, 2021.

<sup>97</sup> Mike Jahn, "Rock Audience Moves to Dusk-to-Dawn Rhythms," *New York Times*, 18 Aug. 1969, 25.

<sup>98</sup> Rickey Vincent, *Party Music: The Inside Story of the Black Panthers' Band and How Black Power Transformed Soul Music* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2013).

<sup>99</sup> Sly & the Family Stone, *Stand!*, Epic 26456, 1969, LP.

*Stand!* and Stone's next album, *There's a Riot Goin' On* (1971). The album's opening track, "Luv N' Haight," alluded to the San Francisco scene but the songs expressed Stone's disenchantment as the hopes of the civil rights era and the counterculture waned.<sup>100</sup> After Stone's performance at Madison Square Garden in December 1971, Clayton Riley's scathing review in the *Amsterdam News* pronounced flower power dead and ridiculed the idea that Stone's music could erase the color line between soul and rock or between Black and white youths. Black music expressed a profound yearning for freedom while rock used "stolen" rhythms and promised freedom but delivered only "the right to buy fun." For Riley, rock and hippiedom were phony rebellions for whites youths that offered nothing more than a good time.<sup>101</sup> Amiri Baraka also criticized Black soul, R & B, and pop musicians for writing apolitical songs. "Where is the Black Music that is not about dope or smoke or scag or booze or copouts?" he asked in 1971. He urged Black listeners to turn off and tune out soul and funk and listen instead to the "visionary Black music" of John Coltrane and Sun Ra, which radiated "the sound of national liberation." If free jazz filled the airwaves, he wrote, "all of our consciousness [would] be so raised that the very government of the united states would be imperiled."<sup>102</sup> Many jazz musicians shared Baraka's disdain for soul and rock, but trumpeter Miles Davis listened to rock, soul, and funk in the 1960s, and the music of Sly Stone especially inspired his jazz fusion experiments on *Bitches Brew* (1969) and *On the Corner* (1972). Davis hoped that these albums' combination of jazz, rock, soul, and funk would attract young listeners Black and white, but most jazz critics were initially ambivalent about *Bitches Brew* and disliked *On the Corner*'s reliance on soul and rock rhythms and electronic instruments.<sup>103</sup>

## WHERE HAVE ALL THE HIPSTERS GONE?

Historians variously mark the death of "the 1960s," the soul era, Black Power movement, and counterculture sometime between Altamont and Watergate.

<sup>100</sup> Sly & the Family Stone, *There's a Riot Goin' On*, Epic KE 30986, 1971, LP. Jeff Kaliss, *I Want to Take You Higher: The Life and Times of Sly & the Family Stone* (Milwaukee: Back Beat Books, 2008).

<sup>101</sup> Clayton Riley, "Sly in the Sky," *Amsterdam News*, 18 Dec. 1971, D1, D4.

<sup>102</sup> Imamu Amiri Baraka, "The Ban on Black Music," *Black World*, July 1971, 9–10. Some ardent proponents of rock, including John Sinclair, also urged his readers to listen to contemporary jazz. See John Sinclair, "Fire Music," *San Francisco Oracle*, 1, 3 (Nov. 1966), 14; Sinclair, "Backdrop to Urban Revolution: Some New Black Music," in Sinclair, *Guitar Army*, 127–30; originally published in *Fifth Estate*, 5 Feb. 1969.

<sup>103</sup> Miles Davis, with Quincy Troupe, *Miles: The Autobiography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 320–22.



Sky-high enthusiasm about the Woodstock Nation in the summer of 1969 had crashed by year's end. On the outermost fringe of the counterculture and communal living, Charles Manson mesmerized a group of wayward souls and scrambled together bizarre interpretations of the *Book of Revelation* and the Beatles' *White Album* to concoct his prophecy of impending race war. In August 1969, Manson sent a handful of his followers to murder actress Sharon Tate and grocery executive Leno LaBianca and his wife Rosemary, telling them that white residents of Los Angeles would blame Black militants for the killings and retaliate. News accounts of the grisly murders and the Manson clan dampened the euphoria radiating from the Woodstock festival, held only a week after the murders.<sup>104</sup> In December, a member of the Hell's Angels motorcycle gang murdered Meredith Hunter, a Black man, in front of the stage during a Rolling Stones concert at California's Altamont Speedway. Hunter's murder, captured in filmmakers Albert and David Maysles's riveting documentary *Gimme Shelter*, offered a shocking counterpoint to the utopian faith in peace, love, and music at Woodstock and prompted *Rolling Stone* and the *Berkeley Barb* to question the young generation's self-proclaimed moral superiority to anyone over thirty. The Manson family killings and the ugly scene at Altamont revealed that long hair, faded jeans, and smoking pot did not guarantee a commitment to peace, love, or racial harmony.<sup>105</sup>

The portentous sound and lyrics of the Temptations' "Ball of Confusion (That's What the World Is Today)" (1970) marked the sea change as the tide of hopefulness that crested in the 1960s ebbed. Released on 7 May, only three days after the killing of four antiwar protestors on the campus of Kent State University, the dissonance and reverb of the song's guitar intro set the tone, and its rapid-fire lyrics anticipated rap by nearly a decade and indicted America's failings ("Segregation, determination, demonstration, integration / Aggravation, humiliation, obligation to our nation"). Whites' push-back against racial equality provoked urban rebellions, leaving "The cities ablaze in the summer time." Mind expansion too often gave way to drug abuse and "Young folks walking round with their heads in the sky." The counterculture waned, sending "Hippies moving to the hills." And the body count in Vietnam continued to rise despite pleas from people around the world to "End the war." The world seemed to be spinning off its axis, and too few

<sup>104</sup> Vincent Bugliosi, *Helter Skelter: The True Story of the Manson Murders* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974).

<sup>105</sup> Jerry Hopkins, "Kiss Kiss Flutter Flutter Thank You," *Rolling Stone*, 13 Dec. 1969, 1; Ralph J. Gleason, "Are We Lost in a New Dark Age?," *Rolling Stone*, 13 Dec. 1969, 21; "Let It Bleed," *Rolling Stone*, 31 Jan. 1970, 18–36; "A Murderous Thing," *Berkeley Barb*, 12 Dec. 1969, 2; *Gimme Shelter*, dir. Albert Maysles, David Maysles, and Charlotte Zwerin, Maysles Films, 1970.

people seemed to care. As the song's refrain lamented, "And the band played on."<sup>106</sup>

Critics of the counterculture were quick to write its obituary and to dismiss it as a failure.<sup>107</sup> Some writers, artists, scholars, and activists tried to draw and enforce sharp boundaries between a white counterculture and Black culture in the 1960s and dismissed the counterculture as nothing more than a lark for white youths. But ideas, styles, and sounds were not easily contained. White hipsters and hippies were inspired by Black culture and Black Americans explored and participated in the counterculture. The counterculture's influence spread far beyond the East Village and Haight–Ashbury and helped transform Americans' ideas about morality, music, fashion, and freedom. The counterculture's heyday may have been fleeting and its utopian vision of peace and love unrealized, but it changed white culture, Black culture, and American culture in ways that survive long after the Death of Hippie.

#### AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

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<sup>106</sup> The Temptations, "Ball of Confusion," Gordy G 7099, 1970, 7-inch single. Mark Anthony Neal dates the beginning of a "post-soul" era to the 1970s, but Emily Lordi contends that soul remained a vital source of aesthetic and political inspiration for musicians and listeners. Neal, *Soul Babies*, 2–3; Lordi, *Meaning of Soul*, esp. 16–18, 150–56.

<sup>107</sup> Tom Wolfe, "The 'Me' Decade and the Third Great Awakening," *New York Magazine*, 26 Aug. 1976, 26–40; Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979); Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).