Traces of 1960's Counterculture Values in the Modern-day Hipster Subculture

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Filozofski fakultet Osijek

Preddiplomski studij engleskog jezika i književnosti i pedagogije

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Mentor: doc. dr. sc. Jadranka Zlomislić

Osijek, 2016.

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Abstract

Due to the present age of the Internet, society has been witnessing major changes in everyday life. Social interaction is progressively shifting to the virtual world, prompting people to form communities on the Internet where their virtual identities interact. The modern-day hipster subculture is the most prominent ever since the Internet has come to be, and as a result hipsters have become a global phenomenon, changing the way subcultures work. However, the public eye views them as an insignificant fad — as pretentious, elitist 'nerds' that represent no importance whatsoever, denoting the term hipster as a pejorative. Nonetheless, certain values observed in the hipster subculture, like individuality, passion for arts and fashion, alternative lifestyles — along with their way of relating to technology and media — strike a resemblance to the counterculture movement of the 1960's. That movement was also blemished in public at the time, disparaging their affiliates and calling them unproductive 'hippies'. Today, the 1960's counterculture movement is regarded as a revolutionary movement that has changed the world for the better — which implies that hipsters are receiving unfair public treatment at this very moment.

Keywords: hipsters, hippies, counterculture, Internet, virtual identity

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Introduction

The exponential technological advancements we have witnessed during the past few decades are undoubtedly the most important factor that defines this age in history — by means of the Internet, people are able to gather and share infinite amounts of information as much as they want to, at any moment. As a result, the mass media has affected the way people think, behave and interact, prompting them to form virtual communities on social media in respect to their interests and worldviews. That has dramatically changed the way cultures and subcultures used to form in a specific geographical area and remain limited by its bounds — today everyone can be a part of a (sub)culture and interact with its members over the Internet, no matter where they come from. Although the American hipster subculture as we know it today barely precedes the World Wide Web era, it's inarguably the first biggest subculture to be popularized and dispersed throughout the world with the help of the Internet. It's also viewed in society as a yet another irrelevant fad that will be forgotten eventually, with hipsters being stigmatized as pretentious, elitist 'nerds.' In this paper it is argued that the modern-day hipster subculture changes the way people perceive cultures and society, in a similar way as the prominent counterculture of the 1960s did, which was also disregarded in its time. Thus, the aim of this paper is to present the hipster subculture as a currently ignored revolutionary movement which brings about social and cultural changes in a manner that can be compared to the counterculture of the 1960s despite being looked down upon and neglected in the area of academic sociology (Schiermer 168). The key link between the two cultures is that both of them exhibit new ways of relating to technology and mass media, and also appreciate art and fashion in a similar manner. The first part of the paper focuses on the definition of the term 'hipster,' and the movement itself — explaining its ambiguousness, values, and significance in modern-day lingo and culture. In the second part of the paper, a brief historical overview of the 1960s counterculture movement is presented along with the values and traits of its members. Additionally, the concept of a counterculture movement is described as well as how the hipster counterculture is associated with it. Internet subcultures and virtual communication are furthermore elaborated as the main aspects of the hipster subculture, also explaining their negative portrayal in media and society as pretentious and elitist. The third part highlights the comparison of similar values between the revolutionary 1960s counterculture and the hipster subculture, with an emphasis on the lifestyles, worldviews, and interests. Drawing a parallel between the two cultures brings to light the hipster subculture

as a positive unprecedented culture phenomenon which should not be stigmatized, ignored, and looked down upon.

1. Exploring the hipster subculture

1. 1. The definition and the origins of hipsters

Although the term ‘hipster’ is prevalent in everyday language, one may find numerous slightly different interpretations of the term. That ambiguity stems from the fact that throughout history the term wasn’t actually used in the same context. The first mention dates back to the 1940s, after the jazz age period in the United States — it was used to refer to hipsters as keen connoisseurs of the newly established jazz music and culture at the time (Fletcher 2009). However, the origins of the word are a matter of dispute. It’s either suggested that it was derived from “hop,” which is a slang expression for opium, or from the West African word *hipi*, which means to open one’s eyes (Fletcher 2009). Considering the fact that the term ‘hip’ stands for something that is fashionably current, or someone who follows modern trends, it’s beyond question that the term was used to denote someone who would avidly take notice of the latest trends. It was during the Second World War that the subculture quickly gained popularity, spreading from jazz enthusiast to connoisseurs of literature by the time the war ended. The hipster subculture was seen therefore as the successor of the Beat Generation, with even Kerouac — a beatnik himself, equating hipsters with beatniks in terms of their hazardous bohemian lifestyles: “illuminated hipsters suddenly rising and roaming America, serious, bumming and hitchhiking everywhere, ragged, beatific” (qtd. in Rabaka 136). The hipster subculture, being overshadowed by the more popular Beat movement, and eventually the hippie movement — both of which cultures were akin to the hipsters, eventually faded away and it was not until the late 1990s when the subculture was brought back to life. Although the term wasn’t necessarily used to denote the same group of people from the 1940s, it was used to denote a group of people who, to an extent, shared similar values and outlooks on life. The biggest difference lies in the fact that the original hipsters exclusively belonged to a lower class, whereas that isn’t necessarily a fundamental rule for the modern hipsters. Instead, modern hipsters more often than not purposely choose to present themselves and behave as if they belonged to a lower class, which reflects the original hipster attitude of anti-consumerism, anti-establishment, and a haphazard lifestyle (Sparta). What is more, instead of being focused around a certain cultural expression, like jazz music, modern hipsters focus on an eclectic range of cultural expressions, be it contemporary or belonging to the recent past (Schiermer 170). What is shared between the two instances is that both of them are particularly fond of fashion, music, literature, and arts in

general. However, the modern-day instance hasn’t come about as a cultural movement consisting of its uniform members who have deliberately chosen such an image and labeled themselves hipsters. In fact, society has recognized the shared values between the two instances of hipsters, giving the modern instance such a name. As a result, modern-day hipsters often reject and scorn being called so, keeping away from being given a label and put in a group that is a societal construct alien to them, while striving for their respective individuality. Despite that, the movement has continued to steadily grow and adopt new values and traits unique to its own character, and prevalent between its members throughout the world.

1. 2. Values of the modern-day hipster subculture

In addition to the fundamental values and worldviews preserved in the revived hipster subculture — and despite the reluctance of a hipster to explicitly present himself as being one; there are inarguably more than a few distinct factors and sets of behavior representing the values of modern-day hipsters. According to Schiermer, one of the most salient distinctive values is predilection to irony, asserting that "irony is a powerful tool used in concrete social interaction," adding that "the successful understanding of an ironic remark creates instant social bonds" (171). In the hipster subculture, predilection to irony manifests itself chiefly as ironic appreciation of objects and styles that are considered either outdated or not in tune with modern fashion and trend standards. Some of items widely recognized, and often stereotyped in society as preferred by hipsters are outdated cell phones, vinyl records, cassette records, or even "trucker hats, undershirts called 'wifebeaters[1]' worn as outwear . . . fake wood paneling, . . . aviator glasses" (Grief et al. qtd. in Schiermer 168). Such attitude implies an underlying passive-aggressive reaction to the materialistic; consumerist society, and perhaps even a satire of striving to be 'in the know' when it comes to the latest trends. However, that often comes across as a misunderstood or even snobbish statement, resulting with hipsters often being scoffed at or ridiculed — more of which will be elaborated in the following subchapters.

Another fundamental trait observed by Schiermer is the redemption of the recent past, which essentially goes hand-in-hand with the said penchant for irony (174). As previously mentioned, hipsters focus on a broad range of different cultural expressions in respect to present, or, more often than not — past fashion trends. Hipsters in fact tend to prefer exploring their parents' generation fashion trends (most commonly the 1960's generation) in order to implement those elements into their authentic own style. Therefore, the most popular cultural activities among them are such as collecting and listening to old vinyl records or cassette tapes, taking and developing Polaroid photographs, weave their own clothing items, or purchase them in thrift stores, etc. Schiermer argues in his thesis that "the hipster appreciation of the aesthetic styles of the recent past ushers in another relation to the parental generation than the one found in traditional sub or youth culture," and thus the irony is apparent in the way hipsters revise past

[1] 'Wifebeater' is an informal colloquial term for white tank tops worn as outwear by men (instead of being worn an undershirt), which is a stereotyped item of clothing for men who inhabit rural areas and practice domestic violence. The fact that such an item is linked with the hipster subculture implies how absurd and grotesque hipsters' ironical sense of self-expression can get.

cultural trends in order to shape their new identity, while disregarding mainstream trends of the now (174). In fact, Michael inferred in her research upon interviewing "young participants deeply involved in urban cultural scenes" that they show disregard for mainstream trends as they find them "shallow, boring, and too easy" (163). In terms of fashion and physical appearance, an epitomic modern-day hipster would therefore be wearing thick-rimmed spectacles, skinny jeans, prominent beards, V-neck T-shirts, overcoats, or even keffiyehs — items, all of which are reminiscent of his parents' generation fashion trends (Deleon 2012). Indubitably, fashion and physical appearance are not the only aspects of redeeming the recent past in terms of cultural expression. In the past two decades a trend has been growing among many underground bands, most notably in the United States, whose sound is seemingly reminiscent of rock bands of the 1960's and the 1970's, regarding their songwriting and audio production with high usage of delay and reverb effects. The strongest example would arguably be the popular neo-psychedelic rock band Tame Impala, whose sound is often described as akin to The Beatles considering their "remarkably Lennon-esque vocals" (Hoffman). Additionally, Hoffman concludes that the "squalling fuzz-toned riffs that populate Tame Impala's debut clearly owe a hefty, heartfelt debt to the hazy churn of late-'60s/early-'70s psych rock." However, another musical movement also based on combining retro musical elements has emerged on the Internet over the recent past years. It essentially started with people combining samples from elevator music and various electro-dance hit songs from the 1970's and the 1980's and jokingly lowering their pitch and tempo. Such practice resulted in a warped sound that created an ambience which perceivably complimented smoking electronic cigarettes and vaporizers (a trend stereotyped as akin to hipsters) — dubbing it Vaporwave (Tanner). The movement eventually grew to yield well-received acts like Macintosh Plus, Saint Pepsi and Vektroid, reaching as much as several millions of plays on the Internet. With the rising popularity of Vaporwave, its central idea of criticizing and satirizing consumer capitalism and popular culture has become more apparent: "Experimental musicians such as INTERNET CLUB and MACINTOSH PLUS manipulate Muzak and commercial music to undermine the commodification of nostalgia in the age of global capitalism while accentuating the uncanny properties of electronic music production" (Tanner 2016). In addition, Lhooq offers a different spin on its etymology: "its name is a spoof of the term 'vaporware,' nonexistent products that companies announce and heavily promote as a corporate strategy to keep their competitors at bay" (Lhooq 2013). Thus it's evident how Vaporwave implicitly represents hipsters' ironic, retro-redeeming, and anti-consumerist values and means of cultural expression. Other highly regarded values pertaining to the subculture are authenticity and individuality when shaping one's identity (Michael 163). In the present age of

having easy access to merely any form of information, the Internet is inarguably the perfect platform for anyone inclined to explore culture and arts. Consequently, connoisseurs of eclectic fashion and arts, such as hipsters, disdain individuals who are keen on imitating or long to belong to a trend as it comes across as distasteful or superficial, i.e., inauthentic (Michael 164). Michael further elaborates on that matter: "Thus, people rich in cultural capital should be more easily perceived as authentic because they are more likely to appear natural and at ease within the post-industrial consumer society" (Michael 168). However, those values create a difficulty when demarcating the modern-day hipster subculture — if an individual longs for individuality and authenticity, he won't likely associate himself with the movement.

Considering the fact that hipsters eagerly explore various forms of cultural expression in order to frame their authentic self, Michael points out another fundamental value — openness to experience (175). However, openness is not limited only to fashion, music, or arts: "Also being open towards different kinds of people is valued" (Michael 175). Accordingly, Weeks observes that, despite the fact that hipsters are inclined to have progressive political views; for the most part they are pacifists and firmly oppose warfare conflicts (2011). What is more, openness to experience likely yields hipsters' widely popularized fondness of organic and artisanal foods, recreational use of psychedelic drugs, and their propensity to lead alternative lifestyles, often consisting of freelancing, backpacking, or working odd jobs — all of which, according to Campbell, are generally in line with "the alternative culture that hipsters advocate" (qtd. in Pfeiffer 2015).

2. The concept of a counterculture movement

2.1. Brief overview of the 1960s counterculture in the United States

Despite the fact that the public eye views the 1960s counterculture movement as being blemished by the unproductive and drug-hazed "Hippies," it is still widely regarded as an important decade of the exploited working class standing up to their superiors. The movement garners praise in academic research papers also: "Historians regard the Sixties as . . . these movements challenged the American government on issues centered on its foreign-policy decisions, besides providing raucous platforms for the awakening of Baby Boomers and educated, audacious youth who spontaneously revolved into the 'flower-power' generation also known as the Hippies" (Poon 155). With its height considered to have peaked between 1965 and 1972, the movement generally refers to the post-World War II baby boom that caused an unprecedented cultural and social generation gap between the young and old generation (Richardson 3). The gap manifested itself as a growing difference in worldviews between the generations, especially regarding their views on cultural expression and fashion — the young adopted new fashion trends that the old disapproved of and often ridiculed them because of that. Such trends involved longer hair for men, afro hairstyles, beads, feathers, flowers, bells, and generally more bizarre and sexual clothing styles with a purpose to flout the mainstream values (Haddock 2014).

The 1960s were a decade primarily notable for the Cold War and general global tensions between the communist and capitalist states. With the development of media and with television becoming a fundamental part of family households, people above all got easier access to information regarding political conflicts on a global scale. Consequently, everyone could find out more easily about all the malpractices and affairs the countries involved in conflicts embarked on — espionage, public affairs, the verge of nuclear war, and so on. By the end of the decade, college and university students across the country steadily outnumbered the rural population (Poon 157). The said advancements in the media furthermore inspired the disillusioned American youth as a collective to stand up against their country's role in the Vietnam War and other conflicts of which they disapproved. "Anti-war street rallies, campus protests against nuclear testing, public sit-ins and the torching of draft cards" progressively gained momentum and, along with public awareness-raising music events like the famous Woodstock Festival, became more prevalent throughout the country (Poon 157). However,

political issues weren't the only focus of the counterculture's attitude. Through generally nonviolent movements, they've sought to resolve sociological issues like racial segregation, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, rights of women, gays, the handicapped, and also the funding of anti-poverty programs (Haddock 2014). Additionally, environmental issues were addressed due to the atmosphere damage caused by human activity in terms of industrialization, pollution, and general unawareness of its adverse effects to one's surroundings. Dozens of incidents were reported where students would sneak into restricted areas of decrepit objects and abandoned parks and plant flowers. However, police would brutally attack trespassers when they caught them, which sometimes resulted in fatalities — such an incident happened in 1970 at Kent State University, where four students were killed and nine were seriously injured (Haddock 2014).

With the end of U.S. military participation in Asia and the end of the draft in 1973, along with the aforementioned brutal police reactions to protests and drug overdoses of several hippie icons like Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin, the movement gradually faded away. Some supporters of the counterculture movement eventually became members of new countercultures, like punk and goth subcultures, while some sympathize with the Hippies to this day.

2.2. The Internet subculture, counterculture, and virtual communication

A crucial aspect of the hipster subculture is that it's the first culture ever to use virtual communication, which implies that its members can communicate from any place, any time, with whomever. This aspect is fundamental in shaping their identity in a way that is present for the first time in history. By means of Internet forums, chat rooms, and social media websites, a member of the subculture can find someone with common interests in a matter of seconds and interact with him/her: "Unlike in the 1960s, in the 2010s sharing and the Internet have created the opportunity for an instant cultural phenomena . . . There's a capability of moving fast in a large coherent way . . . what is partly technical ability to communicate and find each other, but it's also partly cultural — a comfort with living that way" (Brand qtd. in Burke 2013). What is more, Schiermer points out that it's an indicator of "broader cultural changes; not just to a different understanding of generational change, but also to new ways of relating to technology and media" (168). However, ever since the Internet has become a ubiquitous occurrence on all societal levels, a trend that changes the way subcultures function has emerged: "The internet and social media have, to an extent, removed the connection between subcultures and style, birthing a new wave of internet-driven pseudo-subcultures in the process" (Leach 2015). Leach observes that contemporary members of subcultures exhibit less notion to express themselves fashionably in terms of maintaining an image uniform within the subculture, compared to the pre-Internet period. He additionally presents a possible explanation why that happens so: "With style and shopping information so readily available, there is no longer any need to commit to a set of values or beliefs when adopting a group's uniforms or idioms" (Leach 2015). However, due to a great deal of communication happening virtually, a frequent Internet user adopts his virtual persona that is in fact customizable — his or her profile, be it on Internet forums or social media websites. Profiles, regardless of their platform, are commonly customizable in a way that a user can upload pictures, website links, music, arts, and write anything that one considers as a representation of oneself. Such profiles are often deliberately made publicly visible, and thus are used to project users' virtual identities, which may, or may not, be an accurate representation of one's real-life identity. Poletti and Rak argue that the Internet indeed acts as an online platform where people interact through their virtual identities, although little has been researched about Internet identities in the field of contemporary cultural studies: "online social networking behavior is as performative as 'real life' acts, and just as equally implies a stabilized core inner self behind the profile" (56).

Akin to the nature of real-life communities of developing mainstream cultures and therefore countercultures as a critique and reaction against them, the same is also observed in virtual communities. With the ever-growing placements of advertisements on popular social media websites like YouTube and Facebook, and various violations of one's privacy on the Internet, it's possible to evoke disillusionment with the mainstream Internet culture among Internet users. In addition, the observation of the Internet as a hyper-efficient platform for virtual socialization bears the matter of more frequent exposure to people with differing attitudes and viewpoints. Barnes contends that the mere concept of counterculture dates as far back as before some of the most prominent subcultures came to be: "I argue that the revolution it represents began long before the public appearance of the Internet . . . It began in the wake of World War II, as the cybernetic discourse and collaborative work styles of cold war military research came together with the communitarian social vision of the counterculture" (9). In fact, there is now a large number of different countercultural communities on the Internet. The most prominent ones would be blogs, where individuals communicate and share information and opinions — a blog called the Counterculture Criteria creates "an environment in which members of the counter culture can communicate freely," and ComicMix, which is "a blog for those whose interests range from comics and graphic novels to video games" (Misiroglu 93). Another countercultural community would be image boards — websites where users anonymously post pictures or other multimedia content. Such inclusion of multimedia in communication popularized on the infamous image board named 4chan, known for its hipster population, introduced a phenomenon in virtual discourse, which are Internet memes. Often manifested through humorous pictures or multimedia joke references on mainstream trends, their significance and popularity in Internet discourse transcends national, ethnic and cultural barriers: "socially constructed public discourses in which different memetic variants represent diverse voices and perspectives . . . that were created with (users') awareness of each other and . . . were circulated, imitated and/or transformed via the Internet by many users" (Shifman 8). Therefore, it's evident how virtual communicators acquire a specific way of communication that pertains exclusively to their virtual identities.

2.3. Portrayal of hipsters in media and society

In respect to the earlier aforementioned phenomenon of decreasing numbers of apparent subcultures in contemporary society, the hipster movement has been thrust into the limelight of countless Internet articles and other types of media. In fact, hipsters turned out to be a transparent global phenomenon which is not only distinctive because of a specific subcultural fashion statement, but because of a new way of thinking observed in their values and virtual identities. Pfeiffer points out a seemingly stereotypical representation of hipsters in Internet articles: "Now that everyone is making fun of their checked shirts, their fixed-gear bikes, their kale chips and full beards, you would think that hipsters are on their way out. Yet they seem more ubiquitous than ever" (Pfeiffer 2015). It is apparent that hipsters' fashion based on the value of redeeming the past is the biggest part of their image portrayed in media. Despite the fact that mainstream trends normatively consist of borrowing elements from past trends, in the case of hipsters it seemingly comes across as inauthentic in the public eye, according to Arsele: "If you are asking how marketers construe 'hipster,' it usually refers to a rather nebulous category of people that are superficially described as status-seeking, urban twenty-somethings that are on top of trends" (qtd. in Pearl 2015). What is more, the public inclination to make fun of hipsters in some cases can turn into hate: "Death to hipsters. That's what it says on the T-shirt . . . There's an independent film out shortly called Death To Hipsters, too . . . Once you start noticing hipster hate, it's everywhere. Pub signs proclaiming 'No Hipsters' . . . 'Kill them," posted a British comic actor on Twitter the other day, referring to a picture of a man with a waxed moustache" (Marsden 2014). Although Marsden contends that the hate is in fact exaggerated for comic effect, she elaborates that the source of widespread condemnation for hipsters is based on public interpretation of the hipster style and activities as "somehow contrived, inauthentic or ironic" (2014). Additionally, Marsden argues that the hipster appreciation of past cultural forms is in fact genuine and derives from a true appreciation of art and fashion (2014). Regarding the hipsters' most salient value of irony, it also projects a certain elitist and pretentious attitude amongst them — satirizing past trends and embracing their obsoleteness perhaps comes across to people as a 'holier-than-thou' attitude, especially when considering the fact that they may or may not be self-appointed culture connoisseurs.

However, there are some who concur with Marsden's take on the hipster movement as a substantial and genuine cultural movement, despite its being shunned in press. Furia argues that the American society often thinks of hipsters as "posers who appropriate an image of cool

individuality but lack authenticity, but we think there may be real substance beneath it all" (Furia qtd. in Weeks 2011). As examples, he mentions social waves such as "urban farming, the Do It Yourself initiatives and the Occupy movement," adding that there is a large amount of hipsters in those movements who have authentic motives behind it (Weeks 2011). What is more, Schiermer also defends the movement, contending that it is an indicator of broader cultural changes which points out at new ways of relating to media and technology (168). However, not only are hipsters mocked and underplayed in society, but Schiermer asserts that the hipster phenomenon also is neglected in academic sociology (168). Even though "there exists an immense quantity of opinions and observations on the hipster phenomenon made by journalists, bloggers and layman experts of all categories," the traditional subcultural vocabulary still ignores the changes in the concept of subcultures hipsters are credited with, which is due to the "traditional sociological focus on 'rebellious youth,' on alternative 'ways of life' carrying broader emancipative potentials, or on a critique of capitalism is doomed to fail in the case of hipster" (168). To conclude, Schiermer presents a rather intriguing fact: "The entry 'hipster' yields 75 million hits on Google — and thus exceeds the entry 'sociology' (73 million)" (168).

3. Similarities between the two subcultures

Due to general ostracizing and disregarding the whole idea of hipsters as a contemporary subcultural movement in the media, a rather negligible amount of comparisons with other countercultures has been drawn. However, the modern hipster subculture and the counterculture of the 1960s exhibit similarities on several points which imply that the members of both groups have shared values, worldviews and attitude in general — inferring that the hipster movement genuinely exists, and possesses an underlying countercultural nature. The fundamental similarity is observed in the fact that both movements are disposed to make use of contemporary technology and media of their time. In order to bypass mainstream means of media spoon-fed to the masses, the usage is for countercultural purposes, gathering like-minded individuals who share similar interests: "Historically, proto-hipsters have been connoisseurs — people who deviate from the norm. Like hippies" (Sanderson qtd. in Ferrier 2014). In the 1960's, the emergence of television, TV advertisements, and radio, associated with the growing consumerism shaped the disillusionment amongst their generation: "The use of an array of communications tools fueled primarily by television and motion pictures . . . created a wealth of unprecedented cultural information, from music to fashion to gender rights controversies" (Oregon Public Broadcasting qtd. in Poon 156). In the 2010's, the widespread introduction of the Internet has likewise spawned a counterculture of hipsters among the Millennial Generation of today. What is more, the media explosion in the 1960's paved way for the growth of alternative media — affiliates of the counterculture pressed underground newspaper and ran independent radio stations later on, emancipated from mainstream propaganda. Today there are manifold websites like blogs, image boards, and forums that associates of the counterculture frequent and deem them their virtual communities.

In terms of their real-life communities, the general perceptions of both groups regarding their preferred alternative lifestyles are identical. The aforementioned bohemian haphazard lifestyle hipsters prefer is indeed paramount to the counterculture of the 1960's: "The Hippies personified authentic living and individuality . . . living outside the city, closely embracing nature and environmentalism, making their own clothes, turning into instinctual units of organic, self-sustaining communes" (Marwich et al. qtd. in Poon, 159). Although self-sustaining communes are not as prevalent in the hipster subculture as they were among the 1960's counterculture, they denote a different nature of similar values. In fact, in some aspects hipsters

resemble 1960's counterculture's values translated to their virtual identities and communities. Even though the members of the 1960's counterculture exhibited a seemingly stronger fashion; aesthetic statement in comparison to the hipsters, hipsters pay more attention in shaping and customizing their virtual identity than their real one: "The revolution of hippie fashion was an expression of a generation free from societal restriction, out to find and restore meaning to life" (McCarthy qtd. in Poon 159). The case is the same with the communes — hipsters avidly run and attend their 'virtual communes' on social media websites and image boards, which are evidently more feasible to moderate than real-life ones.

Regarding other similar values that come across more obviously, both groups denote a pacifist attitude, and thus are firmly opposed to warfare conflicts — be it Cold War or terrorism. Additionally, a key similarity lies in the fact that both groups embrace individuality, instead of the usual subculture normative that its members tend to flourish uniformly with one another. Further similarities between the two said cultures can be observed in the following: both of the cultures display cultural appropriation for art, fashion and music (with hipsters additionally embracing their influences from the 1960's); they are appreciative of alternative ways of employment, they pay attention to environmental issues, and both recreationally use psychedelic drugs: "The natural reaction to hipsters is disproportionate to the phenomenon . . . It's a peaceful group. They don't fight the police, they don't use excessive amounts of drugs. Research shows that they have progressive values — they show a lot of attention to the environment, for example — but apparently that's not enough" (Schiermer qtd. in Marsden 2014).

Conclusion

New trends, fashion, and thus subcultures undoubtedly form and dissolve in a cyclical manner — they derive their influences from their precedents. That itself can cause a lot of misunderstanding regarding the frameworks of subcultures and especially countercultures, in terms of understanding why people obtain their specific attitudes towards the mainstream society. In this paper it was argued that society tends to judge subcultures based on their external factors such as quirky items of clothing, exploring and embracing past arts and trends, and alternative lifestyles. Instead of exploring only those external factors, a closer inspection of internal factors yields a generally more thorough understanding of subcultures and people. Consequently, analyzing certain values and behaviors of the modern-day hipster subculture such as their specific ways of relating to technology and media, keenness to explore various artistic expressions, and forming virtual communities provides us with a suddenly obvious link with the counterculture of the 1960's that is deemed revolutionary to this day. That link is seemingly dissonant with the public portrayal and opinion of hipsters which is negative and often claims that it isn't a valid movement at all. However, with a closer insight into academic researches of the hipster culture — which are frankly paltry in quantity — it is apparent that there are experts in the field of sociology and culturology who can attest to the positive aspects and unprecedented ways subcultures behave based on the example of hipsters.

Evidently, the aspect of virtual identities and communities in the context of subcultures is observed for the first time among hipsters. However, the mere idea of virtual worlds and societies is heavily ostracized by the media, often focusing on the negative aspects while praising the positive aspects of traditional and conservative forms of social interaction — with bias. Times are changing, as they always will — virtual interactions are progressively becoming a part of everyone's daily life and real-life identity, so the best intention of this paper is to place an emphasis on the contemporary phenomenon of the hipster movement, while pointing out how ignorant, superficial, and dangerous public renditions of not only hipsters but all similar new phenomena can be.

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