Our Very Best Hangover

Fifteen Years After The Fact

"I wanted to be a good hippie. For me and lots of other people a good hippy was something very worth being, if not the only thing worth being."

Mark Vonnegut, *The Eden Express*

I.

Love was a groovy idea while it lasted. And now, just an even decade-and-a-half after Love's crest and declaration of anarchy, this is as good a time as any to recall its worth and shape and feel. In brief, it is about time someone said something nice about hippies. Though many who were not at the center of the bloom will say otherwise, a great cultural transformation took place in the western world between 1965 and '69. As those who have benefited from a movement and its power, let us lay thanks and praise where it belongs.

"Why can't I stand on the corner and wait for nobody? Why can't everyone?"

Emmett Grogan

"May the Baby Jesus shut your mouth and open your mind."

Family Dog motto

II.

We are at the moment sitting smack on the 15th anniversary of two of the fine seminal dates of American social history. The first is October 6, 1966, the day LSD was made illegal in California. This act was the kick in the pants, the bolt of lightening up the ass, which let people know the hippie movement was for everyone. The second date is January 14, 1967, the day of the great Be-in at Frisco's Golden Gate Park polo field, when 20,000 people got together to take the high-grade acid made by the miracle chemist Owsley Stanley and blow their minds as one great tribe all One in the Eye and Heart of Nature.

Within months after these two events the hippie movement became the victim of a glaring media blitz (every Establishment organ had to declare its amazement and/or horror at this new subversive phenomena). By the summer of 1967 – Frisco's occasionally beautiful, mind-bonbing, often grotesque and destructive so-called "Summer of Love" – all the wise heads and beautiful spirits got the secret message and took the movement underground.

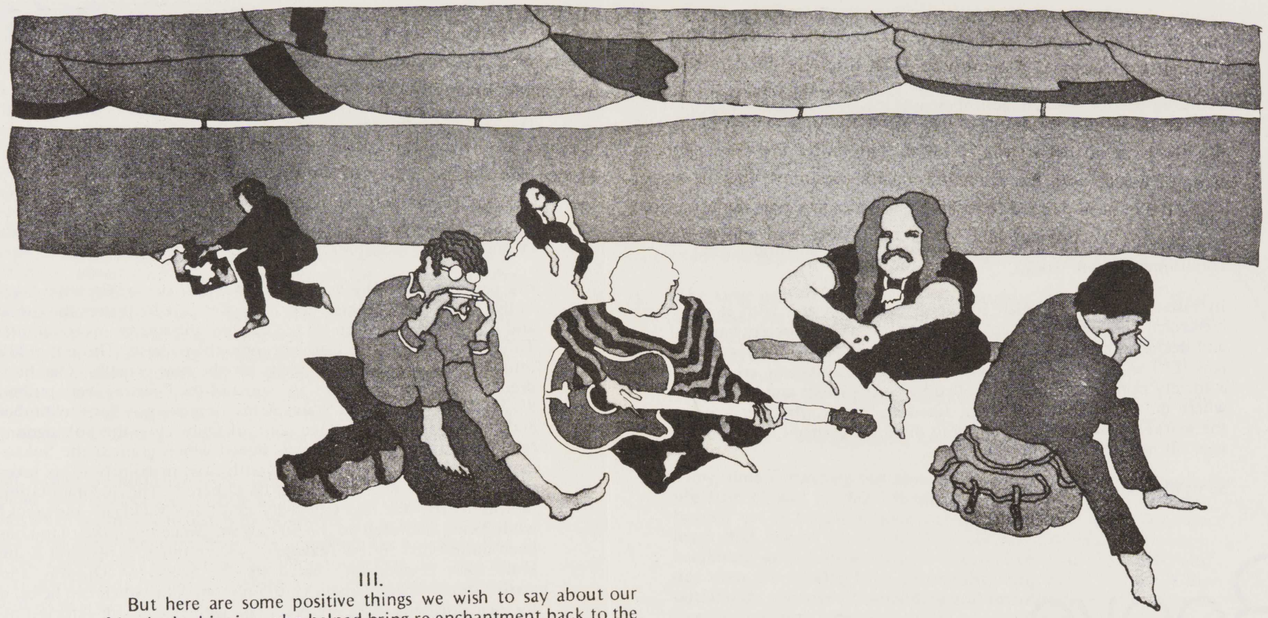
That takes care of the old question, "Where did all the hippies go?"

"HIPPIES, young nonconformists who live apart from established society, distinguished by their search for a non-materialistic way of life, by their preference for unconventional clothing and hair styles, and frequently by their use of psychedelic drugs and marihuana. The term arose to popularity in the 1960's."

Encyclopaedia Britannica
Micropaedia, Vol. V, page 55.

"PSYCHEDELIC, of or noting a mental state of great calm, intensely pleasureful perception of the senses, esthetic entrancement, and creative impetus; of or noting any of the group of drugs producing this effect."

Random House Dictionary of the
English Language



III.

But here are some positive things we wish to say about our friends the hippies, who helped bring re-enchantment back to the world: Once upon a time in a land of quiet repression, lawn furniture, blocked sex, vague yearnings, clairol shampoo, personality games, plastic materialism, and Howard Johnson restaurants, some good people with bright, tender smiles made a discovery, and they said: "O.k. Here it is. Let's do it."

LSD is where it all began. Even though acid has no real moral direction, it allows the tripper to break forms, to caress and perceive the Buddha-nature sitting patiently behind the social mask. LSD removes us from the lie of who we are and allows us to recall our original self. The masquerade and "put-on" disintegrate. Once we have dropped acid and found ourselves in harmonious unity with the perfection of the Cosmos, we see the non-existance of the ego – and thus we no longer can be interested in playing ego or power games. The human attains the hippie's vision, the correct vision, from the moment when no idea, no "fabrication" of the mind any longer comes between person and the fact of reality. This insight experience cuts through the crust of verbal knowledge and reveals the underlying unity and inseparability of the individual and universe.

The elements informing the hippie's psychedelic vision were: material abnegation, spiritual liberation, an erotic sence of actuality, inner peace and total truth. To accept these elements we must decide to no longer use living things for our own ends, no longer abuse the psyches of our fellow humans. What affirms life affirms the life of all.

"Being a hippie isn't dropping out. It's dropping in – dropping in to new ideas and new environments to new channeling of energies. . . . We work harder than most."

a Detroit hippie, 1967.

"Hippiedom is more than a choice of life-style. It's an apolitical systemicide."

National Student Assn. spokesperson.

IV.

How did it all work? Beauty, awareness, self-realization (not ego-gratification, which is where the straight world is), a praise of instinctualism, and nothing less than cosmic consciousness. If you abandon the yearnings for a distant future and instead embrace these forces, you can lend yourself to a life of organic ebb and flow, savor the natural world and your inner nature, and address one's self to experiences which enrich the quest for ecstatic consciousness: the simplicity of leaves and flowers, clear water and stars, the poetry and innocence of children.

From these experiences came the creed: (1.) there can be no heavy worked-out plan, only spontaneous evolution, – so live NOW. (2.) drugs and meditation are a key to God in human form, a vehicle to total consciousness, a way to cosmic orgasm. (3.) do your own thing, wherever you have to do it and whenever you want. (4.) drop out: leave society as you have known it, leave it utterly. (5.) sex is free, the body is beautiful, both are holy, and should be acted upon without fear, guilt or motives, just pure pleasure and communication. (6.) violence is a result of frustrations and repression, a follow-up of mis-perceiving the non-realness of the ego. (7.) the enemy – police, criminals, Establishment, whatever – is not the enemy, just a constant reminder that the trip for the universal unity of humankind was not meant to be easy. (8.) you can't change anyone else – you can only change yourself. (9.) when it comes time for acting directly, don't get hung-up in a heavy game-play, first strengthen your own perceptions of truth and honesty. And finally, above all else, (10.) never NEVER lay your trip on someone else or tell them what to do. In the Haight they used to say there was a double law: "Thou shalt not bend thy neighbor's mind. Therefore, thou shalt not interfere with thy neighbor's bending his own mind."

"Marijuana inflames the erotic impulses and leads to revolting sex crimes - . . . one girl, known for her quietness and modesty, suddenly threw all caution to the winds. She began staying out late at nights."

Daily Mirror, 1924

"All manners of sexual practice are tried."

Time magazine, 1967

V.

At the crest of the movement, social scientists were supplying worried editorial writers with hot copy. On reported: 'Several years absence from demanding social interactions may render them helpless as successful role-players and game-players in the formal structure of American society."

Meanwhile, back at the great high Haight the children of Love were saying: "Outtasight!"

"Diogenes and the Greek Cynics of the fourth century B.C. to six century A.D. denounced established convention and proposed a way of life designed to lead to the happiness of the individual. Believing that artifice corrupts, that freedom is secured by following nature, and happiness is found in virtuous action, they saw themselves as scouts and heralds of god, dedicating one's labors as a reconnaissance for others to follow – watchdogs of mankind to bark at illusion, the surgeon whose knife sliced the cancer of cant from the minds of others."

J.R.P. Garth, *Hellenic Humanism*

VI.

There was a hippie political program as well. The Diggers of Frisco and New York, those joyous advocates of total anarchist revolution, brought it together. It meant living now as if the revolution had already been won. Breaking the stranglehold of the money economy, permitting the gestures between men and women, and men and men, to be natural and open now just as they should be. The Digger program had two parts: (1.) Do your thing; and (2.) It's free.

"The experts will tell you the inner way is a fallacy. It is so big, so correct, it looks fallacious. If it didn't look like fallacy, it really would be insignificant! Here are three jewels of wisdom. Preserve them as touchstones: Let yourself love; avoid extremes; don't strive to be first. When you love you are not afraid; by avoiding extremes you husband your power; and not striving to be first lets you grow and mellow naturally. If you abandon love and reject fearlessness, throw off moderation and reserve strength, give up not striving and clamor to be first – you are hopeless! Love is a winning outgoingness, an impregnable defense. Inner reality provides you with love so that you are preserved from destruction."

Lao tzu, fifth century B.C.

VII.

I want to say the hippie was misunderstood, that the hippie was a "success," and that in fact a deeply transforming social revolution took place in America in the 1960's, assuring that nothing could quite be the same again. People now forget how incredibly repressive and limiting life was here before the hippies came.

The hippie movement was an attempt to shape the unceasing transformation of life and society, to create a new social base of love and compassion. One of the messages of the Haight was "Build a parallel culture!" Contemporary society, the hippies said, isn't worth saving. You can't attack it and change it in the way the New Lefties propose; anyway, most of them are only after a career. Only through voluntary poverty and harmlessness, the mysticism of the earth spirits, pastorial arcadianism, togetherness, the Here and Now, cultivating the self, and higher perceptions, going beyond revolution – to epiphany: only this "activism" could work against the spiritual emptiness, hypocrisy and vicious confusion of our ruling institutions.

The movement was a turning in the deepest seat of consciousness and for that moment it served its stated goal. Will they come again? As they used to say on the street 15 years ago, Everybody turns when the tide turns. And so it will be

J. Dreamseeker

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