

to participate in various groups, such as coming out groups, consciousness-raising groups, groups for people with AIDS-related problems, and so forth. Sometimes workshops are organized covering topics such as self-defense, intimacy and autonomy, or (homo)social skills.

Most homosexuals manage to lead positive and fulfilling lives without the intervention of counselors. Some, however, do need help. It is clear that such help must be given by counselors who have acquired a positive attitude toward homosexuality. Familiarity with the literature on homosexual psychology and with the (local) gay community, its activities and establishments, is also a prerequisite.

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COUNTERCULTURE

The term counterculture came into wide use in North America in the late 1960s to designate a lifestyle then popular among young people and characterized by open rejection of mainstream values—materialism, sexual conformity, and the pursuit of career success, in short what was widely known as the “Protestant ethic.” The abandonment of these “square” values was blatantly announced by such markers as experimentation with drugs, rock music, astrology and other aspects of the occult, as well as flamboyant styles of dress and coiffure. Opposed to atomistic individualism, many counterculturists attempted collective living arrangements in communes, urban at first and then increasingly rural.

Apparently the term counterculture is an adaptation of the slightly earlier

“adversary culture,” an expression coined by the literary critic Lionel Trilling (1905–1975). In many respects the counterculture constituted a mass diffusion—fostered by diligent media exploitation—of the prefigurative beat/hippie phenomenon. As American involvement in the Vietnam War increased, in the wake of opposition to it the counterculture shifted from the gentle “flower-child” phase to a more aggressive posture, making common cause with the New Left, which was not, like the radicalism of the thirties, forced by economic crisis to focus on issues of unemployment and poverty. Of course radical political leaders were accustomed to decry the self-indulgence of the hippies, but their followers, as often as not, readily succumbed to the lure of psychedelic drugs and the happy times of group togetherness accompanied by ever present rock music. The watchword in all these interactions was liberation, a term usually left undefined as it served a multitude of interests. All too soon, however, the violence endemic to the times seeped in, and the 1967 “summer of love” yielded, two years later, to the Altamont tragedy and the revelation of the Manson killings.

Apart from the revulsion against violence, why did the decline set in so quickly? The counterculture shamelessly embraced ageism: “Don’t trust anyone over thirty.” Observing this precept cut young people off from the accumulated experience and wisdom of sympathetic elders. Moreover, it meant that the adherents of the movement themselves quickly became back numbers as they crossed over the thirty-year line. In regard to gay adherents, the distrust of older people tended to reinforce the ageism already present in their own subculture. To be sure, the full force of such problematic effects has become evident only in retrospect. Although outsiders, and some insiders as well, exaggerated the fusion of the counterculture and the New Left, still the convergence of massive cultural innovation with hopes for fundamental political change gave the

young generation a heady sense of imminent revolution.

Discarding (or so they believed) the judgmental hangups of their elders, many counterculture recruits became sexually experimental, willing to try homosexual activity a time or two "for kicks," even if they were predominantly heterosexual. Massive arrests for marijuana possession created a new understanding for the plight of others—sexual nonconformists—who were being persecuted by victimless crime laws. The psychiatrist Thomas Szasz and others correctly perceived the link between the campaign to decriminalize marijuana and the efforts to reform sex laws.

Because the gay movement became visible only in 1969 after the **Stone-wall Rebellion**—at the crest of the counterculture wave, many assumed that homosexuals were essentially counterculturalist, leftist, and opposed root and branch to the established order. Subsequent observation has shown, not surprisingly perhaps, that a majority of gay men and lesbians were (and are) liberal-reformist and even conservative, rather than revolutionary in their overall political and social outlook. Nonetheless, the counterculture fostered a mood of defiant unconventionality that made possible a quantum leap from a score of timid, semi-clandestine organizations to a national movement that openly challenged one of the most deep-seated taboos in Western civilization. It left its mark on the gay lifestyle in terms of dress and music, use of hippie expressions and street talk, the diffusion of at least a nominal communitarian ideal, an eagerness to question the shibboleths of the establishment, a lessening of guilt, and (for gay men at least) a more open acknowledgment of the legitimacy of "promiscuity" or sexual pluralism. Significantly, while the AIDS crisis of the 1980s has caused a reexamination of some precepts of sexual freedom, other counterculture lifestyle traits have persisted, albeit overlaid by new trends to-

ward elite consumerism and career professionalism.

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Wayne R. Dynes

✓ COUPERUS, LOUIS (1863–1923)

Dutch novelist. Couperus was born in The Hague to a family of leading colonial administrators. For a decade of his youth he lived in the capital of the Dutch East Indies, Batavia (now Jakarta). It made a strong impression on the boy, who was to become famous because of his novels about society life in Indonesia and The Hague. Young Couperus was not the manly youngster destined for the administration of the Dutch colonies his parents would have preferred, but was frail and feminine. In the circle of the women of his family he was beloved, and later he married one of his cousins.

He started writing poetry in a delicate style which was not very successful. By contrast his first novel, *Eline Vere* (1889), stood out. It was naturalist with a decadent theme: the sensuous woman. In his semi-autobiography, *Metamorfoze* (1897), he stated that Eline was a self-portrait. His second novel, *Noodlot* (1891, *Destiny*), resembles Oscar Wilde's *Dorian Gray* of the same year (translated into Dutch by Couperus' wife). Bertie, a weakling, and Frank, a straight man, are friends, but to Bertie the friendship is love. When Frank gets acquainted with a young woman and is on the verge of marriage, Bertie sabotages the arrangement with a forged letter. When he admits this many years later, Frank kills him. After his release from prison, Frank meets his fiancée again; they wed, but their marriage is doomed to unhappiness, and they commit a double suicide. The third novel, *Extaze* (1893), has a homoerotic undertone which continued in subsequent works.