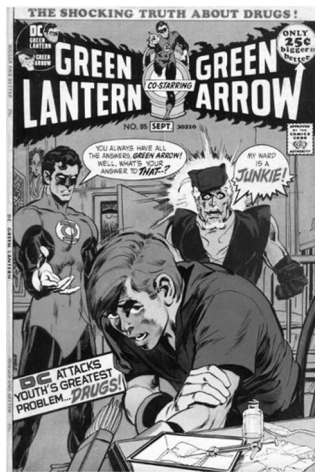


Comics Takes on Counterculture



1

- Massive changes in American youth culture from early 1960s to late 1960s
- rise of 'permissive culture'
- driven by:
 - more women in the workplace
 - introduction of birth control pill
 - rise of divorce rates
 - increased mobility of youth
 - increased purchasing power of youth
- effects
 - anti-establishment rhetoric and action
 - against racial inequality
 - against patriarchal norms
 - against Vietnam War
 - against WWII generation / generational divide
 - increased sex before & outside of marriage
 - increased drug use



2

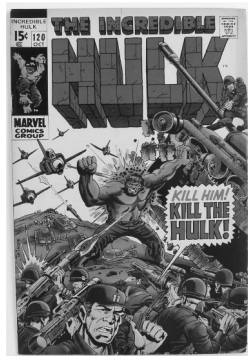
Comics and counterculture

- comics late to the game
- through 1960s both Marvel and DC stayed away from risky topics
 - Marvel touched on more personal conflicts
 - DC stayed true to American 'exceptionalism'
- Began to change in c. 1969
- Why?
 - sales
 - Marvel had caught up with DC in terms of sales by '68
 - but by 1969, sales slumped
 - Marvel looked to boost sales
 - new generation of writers/artists
 - came of age
 - 'relevance' movement

3

Marvel's first attempts

- *Silver Surfer* (1968-70)
 - created by Lee & Kirby
 - heady, existential issues
 - Genter, p. 231
- The Hulk
 - Hulk vs. the army
 - Wright, p. 231



Silver Surfer # 6 (June 1969)

The Incredible Hulk # 120
(October 1969)

4

- Discuss *Spider-Man* #96, 97, 98 (1971)
 - background?
 - Stan Lee asked by Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to put anti-drug message into *Spider-Man*
 - themes
 - how is drug use portrayed?
 - addiction
 - drug pushers
 - how is race portrayed?
 - whose problem is it?
 - is the problem solved?
 - Peter's conflicts/conundrums
 - why be a superhero?
 - guilt?
 - love life w/ Gwen Stacy
 - secret identity
 - friendship w/ Harry
 - MJ treats her poorly
 - knowledge of who Green Goblin is
 - lack of money / ambition
- Later on
 - death of Gwen Stacy
 - *The Amazing Spider-Man* # 121 & 122 (1973)

