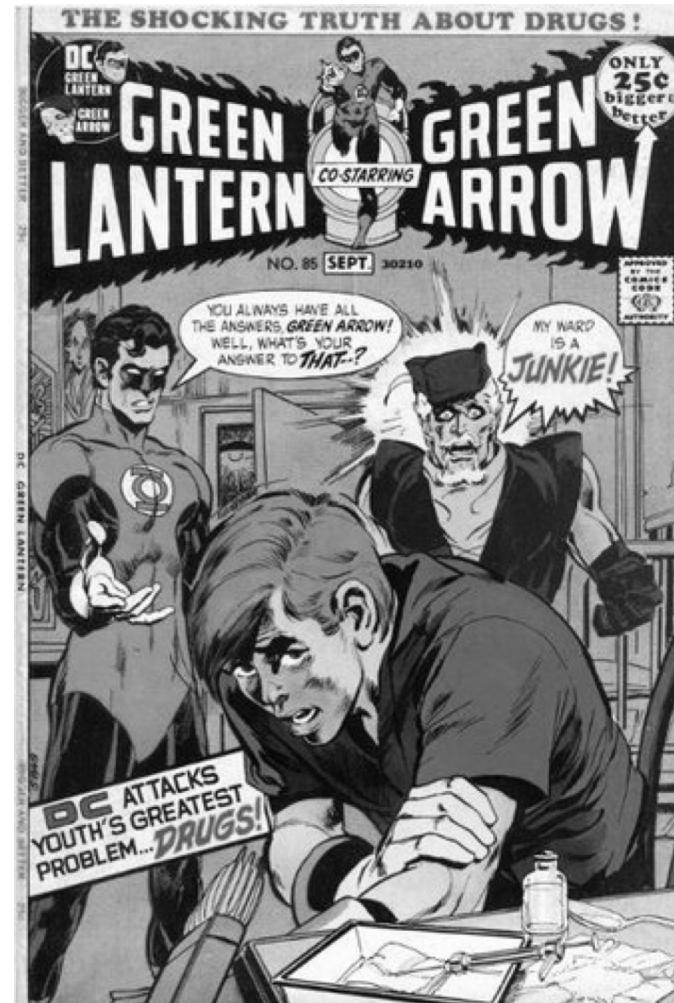


# Comics Takes on Counterculture

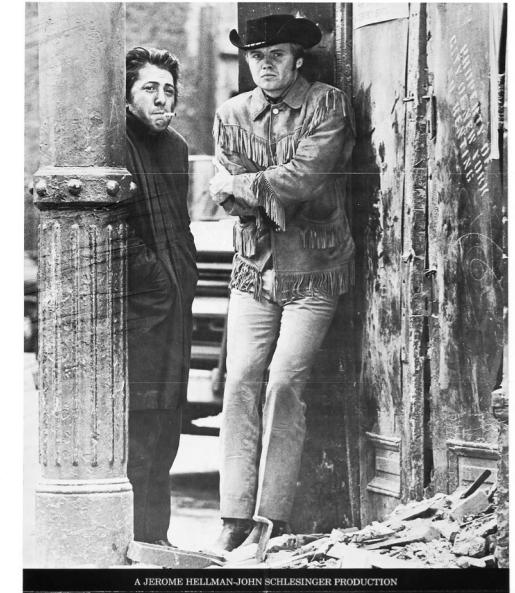
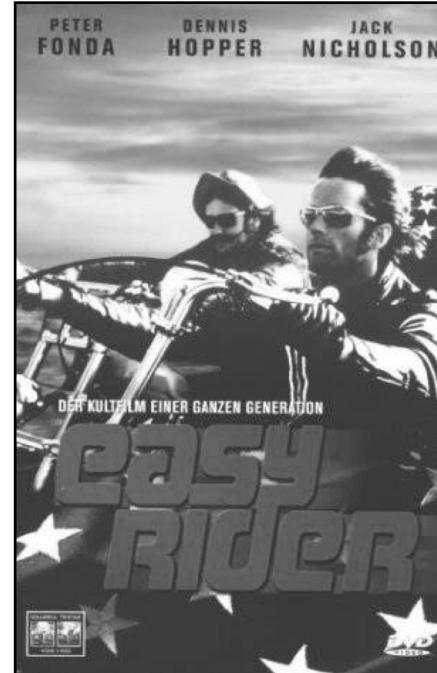


## **“Permissive Society”**

- Important changes in social mores in postwar years
  - embraced promiscuity
    - Premarital & extramarital sex
    - New conception of the family
  - What were some reasons for this change?
    - birth control pill
    - more women in the workforce
  - Drug use became more acceptable

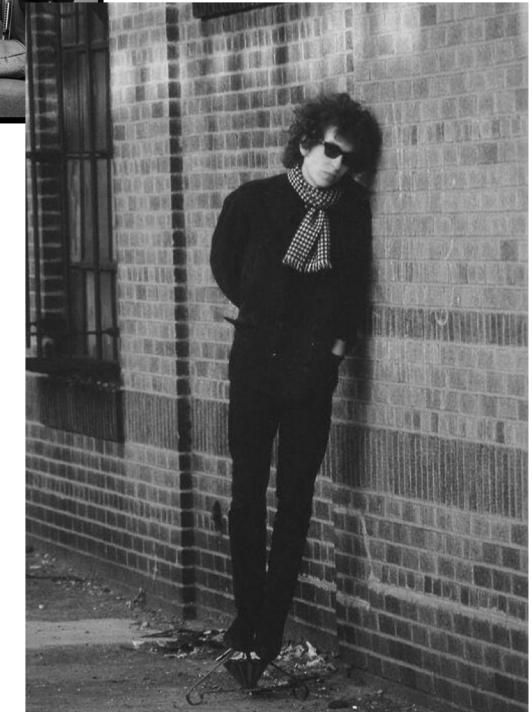
# New Values Reflected in Popular Culture

- Major shift from early 1960s to late 1960s
- Movies
  - *Bonnie & Clyde*
  - *Midnight Cowboy*
  - *Easy Rider*
- Books
  - *Catch-22*
  - *Slaughterhouse Five*
- Magazines
  - *Playboy*



# Rock'n'Roll

- most influential medium among youth culture
- Profoundly changed in tone from early 1960s to late 1960s
  - Bob Dylan
  - The Beatles
  - The Rolling Stones
- Late 1960s went even further
  - The Velvet Underground
  - The Stooges



# 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

## Marvel's first attempts

- *Silver Surfer* (1968-70)
  - created by Lee & Kirby
  - heady, existential issues
- The Hulk



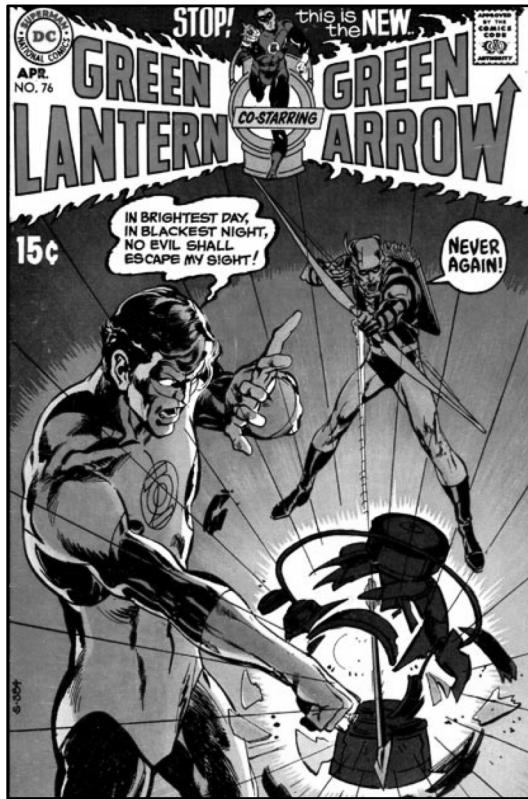
*Silver Surfer* # 6 (June 1969)

*The Incredible Hulk* # 120  
(October 1969)

## DC's Initial Attempts

- clumsy imitations of Marvel
- new DC head: Carmine Infantino (1925-2013)
  - hired new blood
- Green Lantern/Green Arrow
- hired Dennis O'Neil (30) and Neal Adams (28)
  - new DIFFERENT generation
  - influenced by counter-culture
- read Wright, p. 227





# Spider-Man

- Writers initially took a ‘liberal’ approach to problems
  - Spider-Man and campus activists in 1968
    - Wright, p. 236
  - what does that mean (“liberal”) in political terms?
    - between conservatives and left-wing radicals
    - read Wright, p. 235
  - on issues of race, comics were essentially taking the liberal position
    - Marvel had introduced Black Panther (1966), Falcon (1969)
  - Discuss *Spider-Man* #96, 97, 98 (1971)